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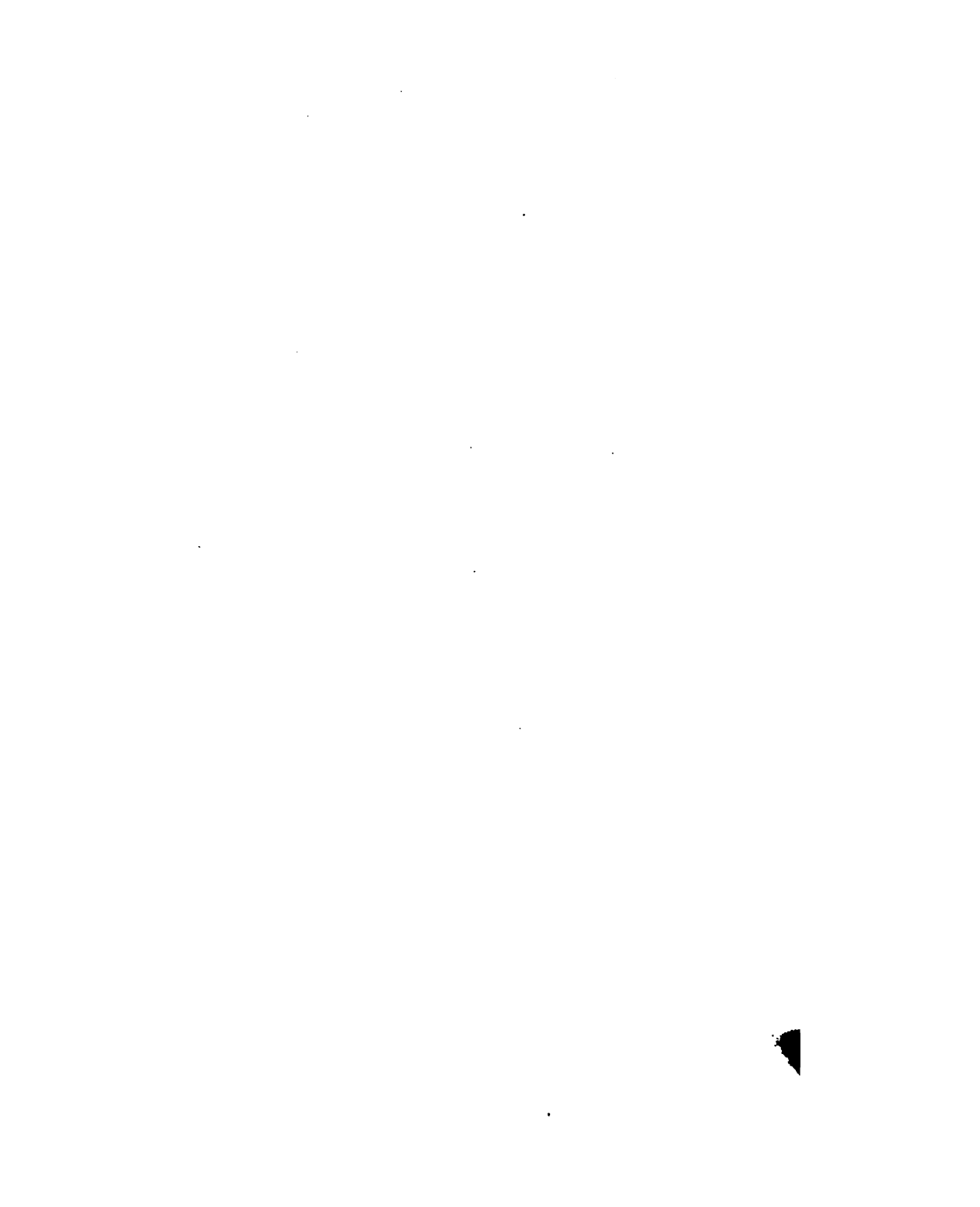
1945



REX REGUM

Desk







MOZAIC IN THE BASILICA OF SS. COSMA È DAMIANO

REX REGUM
A PAINTER'S STUDY OF THE
LIKENESS OF CHRIST
FROM THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES
TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY
SIR WYKE BAYLISS, F.S.A.
PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS
AUTHOR OF "THE WITNESS OF ART," "THE HIGHER LIFE IN ART,"
"THE ENCHANTED ISLAND," ETC.

"Last of all he was seen of me also"


33



LONDON
GEORGE BELL AND SONS
YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN
1898

101490



BY PERMISSION

THIS TRIBUTE
TO THE KING OF KINGS
IS DEDICATED TO
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY
VICTORIA
QUEEN EMPRESS
BY
THE AUTHOR



APOLOGIA

I SHOULD like to place on record the circumstances under which I entered upon the study of this subject. Early in the seventies the late Mr. Thomas Heaphy and myself were fellow-members of the Royal Society of British Artists, and served on many committees. Our homes lay in the same direction, and after the close of a council we generally found ourselves walking together across the Park. It was during these walks, on summer evenings, or star-lit nights, that we first exchanged thoughts on the question, profoundly interesting to both of us, of the authenticity of the commonly received Likeness of our Blessed Lord. Mr. Heaphy, who was considerably my senior, had made it a special study; and had devoted much thought and time and travel to its elucidation. He was, moreover, a portrait painter, so that he possessed exceptional facilities for recording his impressions with subtle insight and discriminating accuracy. In Italy and the south of France he had made many exquisite facsimile

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drawings of the rarest and most remarkable examples, especially of the frescoes of the catacombs, some of which—after existing for more than a thousand years in the safety of darkness—had been brought to light only to perish before our eyes. I also, through my visits to the cathedrals of the continent, was not without some knowledge of these ancient treasures; so that we were never tired of comparing notes, and correcting our impressions, by the information we could give to each other on a matter so dear to us both.

These happy days, however, came all too soon to an end. One morning in 1873 I received a message from Mr. Heaphy who was taken with sudden illness. I hastened to his side, but it was a race with Death, and I never saw my friend again.

Mr. Heaphy, however, had left with his family a request that his drawings and MS. on the subject of the Likeness of Christ should be placed in my hands, and that I should advise as to what should be done with them. I undertook this labour of love, with the result that under my editorship the folio edition of "The Likeness of Christ" was published by David Bogue. It contains all that Mr. Heaphy had left in manuscript, or in articles contributed to magazines, together with photographic reproductions from the facsimiles he had himself made. His original drawings were then

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purchased for, and are now preserved in, the Library of the British Museum.

My companion gone, and the task he had committed to me finished, I still pursued the study of the Likeness. Mr. Heaphy had taken with him to Italy letters from Cardinal Wiseman, which afforded him some assistance in his researches at the Vatican. But at that time the chief museum of Rome was very jealously guarded from the outside world, and Mr. Heaphy met with many hindrances. When it became my turn, however, to seek for an open sesame, I found one so potent that it left nothing to be desired. Cardinal Manning—with the courtesy for which he was so distinguished—gave me a letter, under his episcopal seal, which the Cardinals of the Vatican honoured by granting me access to the most sacred of the hidden treasures. Thus I was able not only to make fresh drawings, but to verify the researches of my friend.

I should like to say a word also as to the method of my argument—a method which, I believe, has never before been attempted. I discard from it all traditional stories of this or that supposed portrait. The evidence is much higher than that of any attestation of individual witnesses who may or may not speak the truth. The evidence is that of the Likeness itself, traced to the knowledge of

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the contemporaries of the Apostles, and even to the knowledge of the Apostles themselves. And I ask the Reader to observe that my subject is not the likenesses of Christ, but the Likeness of Christ. Our knowledge of the Likeness is no doubt reached through the likenesses, but the two things are distinct, and must be clearly differentiated in the mind throughout the argument. The many likenesses we possess are links in the chain, but not one of them is the Likeness, any more than a single link is the chain.

My argument, therefore, cannot be judged by fragments. It is like a ship's cable, of which everybody on board can see the first few links, but of which the links plunged in the sea can be reached only by a diver. The safety of the ship depends on each link, and yet no single link independently of its fellows can hold the anchor. We see the Likeness to-day, and know whence it came to us : but it soon seems to disappear in the darkness of the past, as the cable disappears in the sea. But it is not really lost, and my purpose is to follow it link by link until we reach the end.

I shall ask my Readers, therefore, to go back with me, century by century, examining this Likeness of Christ and the source from which each school, or church, or period received it. I shall not overweight the argument by an unnecessary multiplication of examples. To show that it

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existed before the time of the great painters is to show that the great painters did not invent it. Similarly, to show that it existed in the Roman period is to show that it was not a creation of the mediæval Church. To show finally that it existed in the time of the Apostles, and has never changed since then, is to show all that I desire. If it satisfied them it may well satisfy us.

The subject naturally divides into three parts. The first part—Yesterday—deals with the Likeness in its ancient form and surroundings; and with the evidences of its authenticity. The second part—To-day—takes up the history of the Likeness after the interregnum of a thousand years and shows what has been done with it by the great painters, including those of our own time. The third part—For Ever—is a brief *résumé* of the argument, and an aspiration that the face of Christ shall never fade from our eyes as have faded the faces of the old gods.

In entering upon such an enquiry as this we find ourselves at once in the midst of the long train of categories set forth by Aristotle. There is *substantia*—is it actual or is it only essential? There is *quantitas*—does it extend to colour and expression? or is it limited to form? There is *qualitas*—is it an imprint or a transcript? from sight or from memory? There is *relatio*—what

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is its affinity to the pictures of the saints? or to our own portraits? There is *actio*—how does it affect us? There is *patientia*—what have we done with it? There is *locus*—where? there is *tempus*—when? there is *situs*—its setting? there is *vestitus*—its apparelment? Before argument can be founded on the Likeness these questions must be met and answered—and they constitute an appeal not only to the archæologia but to the humanities of the subject. If in the ordinary practice of Art we find elements which elude definition—how can we hope to define the unknown quantity arising from the union of two natures? In speaking of One whom we believe to be both human and Divine it is necessary to use figures of speech. The many likenesses of Christ all emanating from the same source—as the petals of a flower spring from the life of the flower—I have called the Rose of our garden, and have likened to the White Rose of the Paradise of God. The simile is not the same as that of Dante—

“In forma dunque di candida rosa
Mi si mostrava la milizia santa,
Che nel suo sangue Christo fece sposa.”

The White Rose of the Divina Commedia is the great company of the Redeemed—the petals are individual believers; and, as a rose, even a white rose, deepens with colour towards the heart of it,

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so the wide circles of this saintly host, as they approach the centre, become incarnadine with the very life-blood of Christ. Then, with a sudden change in his imagery, Dante sees it as an oriflamme of light, in the midst of which is the Divine and yet human figure—

“— del suo colore stesso
Mi parve pinta della nostra effige.”

The simile I have used is much less complex. By the Rose I mean the Likeness of Christ—by the scattered petals I mean the likenesses.

Imagery, however, is of no value in an argument except to make clear our thoughts about things unknown by comparing them with things known. The thoughts of men about one man during nineteen centuries—how they have changed! The thoughts of men about One who, to half the human race, is very God, while to the other half He is only a Galilean peasant—how they conflict! The conceptions of the great poets and painters of the Renaissance, and the crude imaginings of the dark ages—how irreconcilable they seem to each other. What is there that can unite them? Imagery tends to differentiate, to separate. Truth only can bring together. There is in the Imperial Library at Vienna an illuminated manuscript of the ninth century. It represents Christ upon the

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cross, but still living. At each side are the Sun and the Moon, looking at Christ, and preparing to cover their faces with their drapery. Need I add that in this picture there is no Likeness. Our Lord is represented in the beauty of youth. What had Truth to do with Art—or Art with Truth—in this case? Now, if no man had seen Christ at any time—if our Lord was a far-off, unknown, invisible, inaccessible being, of whom only our imagination could take cognisance, we might accept this representation, or Dante's vision, or Milton's description, as raising rather than degrading our conception of Him.

“He in celestial panoply all arm'd,
Ascended ; at his right hand Victory
Sat eagle-wing'd ; beside him hung his bow—
His countenance too severe to be beheld,
And full of wrath bent on his enemies.”

But where truth is the first consideration, whether in Art or in Religion, the rudest record of the face of Christ drawn by the humblest painter who had really seen Him is worth more than the most imaginative picture of the Sun and Moon—or the sublimest conceits of Milton or Dante.

How direct are the first records we find in the catacombs—simple portraits, unconfused by symbol. How sincere are the mosaics of the basilicas, repeated without change during a thousand years.

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How pathetic are the attempts of the early painters to represent the sufferings as well as the glory of the Redeemer. How splendid are the pictures of the masters of the Renaissance—unfolding the life of Christ from the cradle to the cross. How enduring is this Likeness, that neither defect in the Studio nor defection in the Church, nor indifference of the World can alter or destroy. The secret of it lies in this—the Divine Comedy and Paradise Lost are great as works of Art, but the Likeness is true as a record.

One word more, with regard to the illustrations. Those from the pictures by the great masters of the Renaissance and from the works of living painters present but little difficulty. The modern process of reproduction enables me to print with the text the very touch of the artist without the risk of errors inseparable from translations made by copyists or engravers. For the photographs thus reproduced I am chiefly indebted to Franz Hanfstaengl, whose renderings of the old masters are of unsurpassable beauty.

To secure trustworthy transcripts of the ancient relics was not so simple a matter. It requires skill of a very high order to reproduce works of this class without adding to, or taking from, the original effect. Moreover, some of these pictures are held to be in the highest degree

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sacred, and have never been submitted to the process of photography. Others again are not to be seen except in connection with religious ceremonial. Many of the frescoes of the catacombs have nearly perished through the effects of damp, or of smoke from lamps and burning tapers: while the colossal figure in the church of SS. Cosma e Damiano bends over us from a curved surface of the apse, so that photography gives but an imperfect account of it. In all these cases I have had recourse to Mr. Heaphy's drawings in the British Museum—which I have been able to verify—and which I have found to be beyond comparison more accurate than any other transcripts I have ever seen.

Amongst these beautiful drawings of Thomas Heaphy there is one of singular interest as touching the argument for the authenticity of the Likeness. It is the delicate profile of a woman's face—the facsimile of an outline scored inside the grave of one of the earliest of the Christian martyrs. The pathetic story of Eutychia, and the bearing of the outline on the evidences, will be found in the chapter on actual portraiture. I refer to it here for the sake of bringing together in this record of the Likeness of the Master the names of these two, His servants, who lived in times so very far apart—the woman who, undismayed by fire or sword, was one of the first to wear the Likeness round her

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neck as that of her friend as well as her Redeemer—the man who when the World, growing old, was beginning to treat the Likeness as a myth, set himself to the discovery of the evidences of its truth.

The catacombs of Rome are of vast, indeed of unmeasured, extent. The length of the corridors is estimated to be not less than seven hundred and fifty miles. All the ground under the city and part of the Campagna is hollow with them. Labourers are kept constantly at work in them, penetrating to their inmost recesses. When the grave of a martyr is discovered, with its monogram and palm, and lacrymatories, these things are removed for safety to the museums of the Vatican or the Lateran. After a gallery has been explored it is closed again, so that a few only are kept open for the inspection of strangers. It thus happens that drawings made long ago in these dark chambers have been copied from one book to another, until at last they are scarcely recognizable. The Callistine portrait has suffered in this way more cruelly than any other. Fifty years ago it existed as a faint shadow on the wall, and I give a facsimile of it as it appeared then. To-day I see woodcuts and outlines of it—or said to be of it, though the original has of course no outline—so hard and definite that they might be of beaten

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brass, or of cast steel. Such illustrations are as fictitious as they are ugly : and it is not surprising that they fail to convince. But I believe that the very crux of the question lies in the fidelity and accuracy of the illustrations ; and, for this reason, my “Rex Regum” contains no example of the Likeness that has not been drawn or reproduced directly from its original.

During the many years in which I have been engaged upon this study, I have, of course, read innumerable books which bear more or less directly upon the subject. Church histories, archæological treatises, descriptions of the catacombs and of early Christian symbolism, are full of references and allusions, interesting in themselves, but desultory, and leading to no certain conclusion. But nowhere do I find the question of the authenticity of the Likeness really dealt with as a question that must be met and answered. Writers on ecclesiastical or antiquarian subjects either assume the verisimilitude, or pass it by ; or lay stress on some particular icon or engraved gem. But of the Likeness, the Likeness itself, apart from any individual example with a story attached to it—the Likeness as it may be gathered by a recension of many likenesses—they seem to know nothing. I have taken account, however, so far as I know, of every objection that has been made ; and from time to

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time have dealt with different phases of the subject. The chapters on the Awakening and the Renaissance, appeared very recently in the "Magazine of Art," and I am indebted to the courtesy of Messrs. Cassell for permission to include them in this work without waiting for the expiration of the term of their copyright. In "Rex Regum" will be found also all that I have written on the ethics and æsthetics of the Likeness in "The Witness of Art" and in "The Enchanted Island."

But if my study of the Likeness of Christ is now more complete, the objections of which I must take account are more vehement and definite. They are no longer the hesitating criticisms of writers who think that perhaps it may be true but shrink from committing themselves. I have now to meet the objections of one who is at least quite sure himself that the Likeness we have treasured for nearly two thousand years is not the Likeness of Christ. In the Dean of Canterbury's book on "The Life of Christ as represented in Art," all that can be said against the authenticity of the Likeness is set forth.

With the Dean's objections I shall deal very fully; but it would be superfluous to anticipate arguments which must speak for themselves. I will only add that I make no pretence to an impossible impartiality. The evidence satisfies me of the

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truth of the Likeness, and I rejoice in it. It is precisely the same evidence as that on which S. Paul bases his argument for the Resurrection of our Lord. Limit the use of it as you will ; guard against the abuse of it if necessary : but the fact remains that the manhood of Christ was visible to men apart from the Godhead. And of this fact the Likeness is the record. There is no escape from this dilemma. If the Likeness of Christ is not authentic it is misleading, and the Church, in holding it before our eyes these nineteen centuries, has been inviting us to believe in, and to anticipate the second appearance of, a personality which we shall not only never see—but which never had any existence. I believe that the Likeness of Christ must stand or fall with Christianity.

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YESTERDAY

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THE WHITE ROSE

*Is the face we recognise as the
face of Christ the real likeness of a
real man? or is it only the fanciful
creation of an artist's dream?*

WHEN I entered my studio this morning I found a flower on my writing-table. It was a rose. I admired its beauty and then wondered. For it is December—and the time of roses is long past. If I look into the garden all is colourless and sad—the lawn is covered with frost, the landscape is a pale etching in black and white. What is this lovely creation that brings colour into the dull light of the decaying year? The children are busy in the house, decorating everything for Christmas. Is it a rose, then? or is it only one of those clever imitations in which the mind of a child takes delight?

Whatever the thing may be, it is certainly beautiful. It looks like a rose—but one's eyes

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may easily be deceived by the cunning of the artist. It smells like a rose—but its perfume may have been imparted by the skill of science. I may be told that it was cut from the tree to-day—but that would be testimony, not proof.

See, I will make sure for myself : I will examine the delicate texture of the petals ; I will push aside the corolla, and come to the stamen ; I will observe how these grow out of the sheltering calyx ; I will reach the living sap, and there shall be no longer any doubt. If the thing has the life of the rose, it is the rose itself.

Now in the Paradise of Art we have many beautiful flowers, and amongst them one more lovely than the rest. Whether or not it be the White Rose of the Paradise of God, it is at least the rose of our garden. Is it real ; or is it a sham ? Is the face we recognise as the face of Christ the real likeness of a real man ? or is it only the fanciful creation of an artist's dream ?

ANTECEDENT PROBABILITIES

*Every a priori consideration leads
to the conclusion that the Likeness is
authentic.*

IS the face we recognise as the face of Christ the real likeness of a real man? or is it only the fanciful creation of an artist's dream? It is to find a solution to this question that these pages are written.

It seems a strange question to ask in a Christian country; but it is surely a question to which we ought to be able to give a definite answer. And yet, how hesitating is the answer generally given! How many there are, living in this nineteenth century, who can give no answer at all! It is not the length of time that has elapsed since the "pale Galilean" stood at Cæsar's bar that presents a difficulty. We know very well what Cæsar was like, for we have his image and superscription, on perhaps the very coins that Christ rendered to him in tribute. Nineteen centuries are as nothing in

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the record of Art. It is not that portraiture was unknown in the days of the Apostles ; on the contrary, it was a marked characteristic of the age. At the very time when S. Paul and S. John were evangelising Asia Minor there were counted in one little island they visited, no larger than an English county, more than three thousand statues. It is not, again, that the followers of Christ were lukewarm or undemonstrative in their attachment to their Master ; the accusation against them was that in their ardour they had turned the whole world upside down. It is not that the teaching of Christ lay slumbering in some hidden manuscript for generations, only to come to light after He had Himself passed away and His face had been forgotten. His teaching was by word of mouth, and the people heard Him gladly. The great multitude, listening to S. Peter on the day of Pentecost, were in the presence of men who had companied with the Lord all the time that He went in and out among them, and who had but just parted from Him as witnesses of His resurrection. It is not that His disciples failed to proceed immediately to engrave upon their chalices and pateræ, and to paint over the graves of the martyrs, the figure and face of One, doing the acts that Christ alone did, and bearing the attributes that Christ alone bears. It is not that these representations have been lost—they have

ANTECEDENT PROBABILITIES

been preserved to us and we can see them to-day in the museums of the Vatican and the Lateran. It is not for any of these reasons that a doubt has been raised as to the authenticity of the Likeness we possess. All these things are but the simple facts of the case, uncontested, and known to everybody. Why then should there be any doubt at all? The antecedent probabilities are altogether on one side. If anything connected with the subject seems strange it is that the authenticity should be denied. If it is denied, the onus of proof should rest upon those who deny it.

But those who care to get at the truth on such a question as this, are not content to rest their faith on a dialectical dilemma. They seek not only to destroy an erroneous impression, but to create a true one, on solid grounds. The authenticity of the commonly received Likeness of Christ is not only to be believed, it is to be proved.

The timidity that is so often felt in approaching the subject, and the prejudice against accepting the Likeness of Christ as authentic, arise from two sources;—first, the sense of the spirituality of the Divine Being; and second, the dread lest, if the Likeness be accepted as true, the recognition of its truth might lead to evil results in practice. But my subject is the Likeness of Christ as it

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concerns the artist in his studio, and not as *it* concerns the theologian. It will be necessary indeed for me to refer to things and to events that are held to be sacred, and I shall speak of them freely and with reverence. Without entering upon any religious controversy I take it that the doctrine of the perfect humanity of Christ is as vital to the Christian Faith as that of His divinity. Upon this subject Art has something to say, and in Art, as well as in Religion, the only safety lies in truth. As surely as a false conception on the part of the artist with regard to the Likeness would react unfavourably upon Religion; so surely a false conception on the part of the religionist would react unfavourably upon Art. If the true Likeness has been hidden away or destroyed, the Church has been guilty of a *suppressio veri*; if a fictitious Likeness has been substituted for the true, the Church has been guilty of a *suggestio falsi*. There is no escape from this dilemma. Religion and Art are, indeed, in very close alliance, but neither can be served, or serve the other with a lie.

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*The only objections to the Likeness
are of a theological character, and
have been overruled by the universal
practice of Christendom.*

THE doubts which have been expressed as to the authenticity of the Likeness of Christ do not arise, therefore, from any antecedent improbabilities in History or in Art. Apart from religious sentiment, every *a priori* consideration leads to the belief that it is a simple historical record—drawn by men who had seen Christ for men who had seen Christ—in an age and amongst a people with whom the art of portraiture was a common practice—imperfect, it may be, from the point of view of the artists of to-day, yet fairly trustworthy, or it would not have been generally accepted at the time. Against this common-sense view of the question, however, is to be set an esoteric feeling that it cannot be true—that it is too good to be true. It is held that Christ,

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being God—the very God who forbids the making of an image of God—cannot have given to the world an image of Himself. This argument, however, is based on incomplete premises, and contains a threefold error.

In the first place, it ignores the dual nature of Christ. The Likeness of Christ does not pretend to be in any sense a representation of His Divinity, but only of His Humanity. Of that it is the only visible record we possess. It is therefore a record not only of a great historic fact—it is a record of an essential article of our faith. It is a record that Pilate would have understood. Looking upon it he would have said—Yes, that is the prisoner I delivered to be crucified. The mother would have understood it, and have said—It is my son. The disciples did understand it, and placed it in the catacombs to remind them of the face of the Master. For the knowledge of the face of Christ was to the early Christians a necessary element in the evidences of Christianity. It was to the recognition of the human personality of Christ by a great multitude of witnesses, that S. Paul appealed in proof of the resurrection. It was in the belief that they would recognise Him that they daily expected His return—when every eye should see Him—even they also who had pierced Him. Whose eyes should their eyes look upon—flashing

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with the lightning of heaven—but the very eyes which had looked with love and pity upon them? Whose hands should wield the sceptre of the kingdom but those which had been pierced? Without a clear perception of the Likeness of the Redeemer the testimony of S. Paul's many witnesses would have been vain—the visions of S. John's Apocalypse would have been unintelligible. For the companions of Christ to have so effaced His image from their minds as to think of Him only as the invisible God would have been—expressed in terms of humanity—unnatural; it would have been—expressed in terms of theology—the confounding of the Persons through fear of dividing the Substance.

Secondly, the argument takes no account of facts. As a fact, the direct teaching of the story of the Cross was—at least for the first millennium of the Church's history—committed to Art rather than to Letters. Since the invention of printing the written word has taken the place of pictorial representation. But forty generations had lived and died and the World had become Christian, before the sacred text was in the hands of the people, and the people were educated to read it for themselves. In the preface to the Revised Version it is stated that the earliest MS. of the Old Testament of which the age is certainly known, bears date A.D. 916; and that, of the New Testament,

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nearly all the more ancient of the documentary authorities have become known only within the last two centuries ; some of the most important of them, indeed, within the last few years. So that, if the nearness of the record to the event counts for anything, the frescoes of the catacombs have an advantage over the Bible, in that respect, of nearly a thousand years.

In the third place, the argument is irrelevant to the issue. If it means anything it means the total prohibition of all pictorial representations of our Lord. But if *all* are forbidden, it matters not whether they are true or false ; the general interdiction would destroy true and false alike. There is, however, no Church in Christendom prepared to accept such a conclusion of the matter. The widest divergence of opinion and practice exists as to the use of Art in religious ceremonial ; but to reject the Likeness of the Master absolutely—from our churches, our picture galleries, our museums, our libraries, our homes—this would go very near to a rejection of the Master Himself.

With this brief reply to the difficulties which have been raised by theologians, I should be content to leave Theology altogether, and pass to the consideration of the subject as it affects Art and artists alone. But quite recently the Very Reverend the Dean of Canterbury has contributed

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to the discussion a work of inestimable value. "The Life of Christ as Represented in Art" sums up for the first time all that can be said against the views I have expressed. Hitherto objections have taken the form of parenthetical allusions, scattered through the pages of many writers. At last a distinguished author has addressed himself to the subject, with the result that, to his own mind at least, the controversy is closed. Dean Farrar says, "Whatever may be written to the contrary, it is absolutely certain that the World and the Church have lost for ever all vestige of trustworthy tradition concerning the aspect of Jesus on earth."

This is a bold statement ; and of course, if it is true, there is nothing more to be said, except that it is as sad as it is strange. Happily it is only necessary to read a little further in Dean Farrar's book to find that it is nothing more than a pessimistic view of the case, not based on any solid argument, but appealing exclusively to a particular phase of religious sentiment.

One notices, first, that, beginning with the assurance that the Likeness is fictitious, Dr. Farrar follows it through the long centuries into every ramification of time and place, style and material—fresco, mosaic, sculpture, painting—with an affection and reverence and appreciation difficult to

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conceive in one who all the while believes it to be a fraud. One then perceives that the authorities he quotes against it are not historical or archæological or artistic; they are solely theological. Moreover, they do not touch the question of the verisimilitude; they deal only with the question whether *any* representation, true or false, should be permitted by the Church. And on that question, on which alone the Church—as distinct from the Studio—has a right to speak, Dean Farrar does not himself accept the authorities he cites. On the contrary, he gathers together in his beautiful book nearly two hundred of the forbidden things, which he says invaded the Church at a very early date, and publishes them for the edification of the Church of the nineteenth century.

And what are these authorities which the Dean himself sets quietly aside? They are certain of the Fathers, of the second and third and fourth centuries. But it is obvious that if these objected, they were in a minority—that their objections were overruled by the Church—and that the Church itself became the guardian and keeper of the Likeness. The first is Tertullian—"the fierce Tertullian," as Matthew Arnold calls him—who said: "*The sheep He saves, the goats He doth not save.*" Now, I am not concerned with the opinions of Tertullian as a divine; but I can see at once

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that they are in direct antagonism with the belief of the artists who, in their humble way, taught Christianity by means of Art in the catacombs. With them the favourite subject for illustration was Christ as the Good Shepherd. And I observe that it is not always the lamb—it is the kid of the goats—that is carried upon His shoulder. *The sheep can run by His side; it is the goat that must needs be saved.* Art is already in conflict with dogma. If Tertullian cannot bend it to his will, Tertullian will break it.

But then there is Origen. The Church had been taunted by an Epicurean philosopher on the ugliness of their God. The first pictures of Christ in the catacombs were indeed ugly—to Celsus—just as the teaching of S. Paul was foolishness to the Greek. But that is strong evidence that they were honest attempts by inefficient artists to represent one whom they had seen, and not ideal creations of their own imaginations. Celsus was right in describing them as ugly. The second-rate painter who can make a likeness, absolutely startling in the vividness of its physical resemblance, will often fail to show the beauty of soul that underlies and transfigures the face of a man who has passed through the fires of suffering or tribulation. If Celsus could have seen the face of Christ painted by the masters of the Renaissance, he might have withheld that taunt.

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The time had come, however, when the Church, in defining her dogmas, had to face the subtleties of the Philosophers. Origen undertook to answer Celsus. He admits the ugliness of the outward form ; but to those who have eyes to discern spiritual beauty, he thinks Christ will appear beautiful. The Likeness of Christ, then, so far from being unknown either to His disciples or to His adversaries, was a subject of discussion even in the second century. The pagan Philosophers, to whom physical beauty was an attribute of deity, derided it. Some of the Fathers were for destroying it altogether—but that, happily, was impossible—it was treasured in too many hands. Irenæus inveighed against the Gnostics for claiming to possess a likeness made by order of Pilate, but that only demonstrates at what a very early date the claim was made. Eusebius gently reproves the Empress Constantia for asking him to send her one of these likenesses. He does not say that he has it not ; nor does he question its existence. On the contrary, he speaks of it as a thing well known. But he dissuades her from desiring it. “ Do you desire,” he writes, “ the true unchangeable likeness which bears His impress, or that which, for our sakes, He took up when He put around Him the fashion of the form of a slave ? Such images are forbidden by the Second Commandment. They are not to be found in churches.” These words

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could scarcely have been written by a man to whom the real Likeness was unknown or inaccessible. He adds, moreover: "It would be a scandal if the heathen supposed that we took about with us the pictures of Him whom we adore." That was at the time when the Church, emerging from the darkness of the catacombs, brought in her hand the treasured Likeness of the Redeemer. Fifty years later Epiphanius was not so gentle. Seeing one of these pictures of Christ painted upon a curtain in a church, he tore it down with his own hands, and ordered the vergers to use it as the shroud of a pauper, Happy pauper, to be wrapped in the arms of Christ! Was ever warrior or ecclesiastic or king buried in such panoply as that? Epiphanius was counted one of the saintliest and most orthodox prelates of his age, and he tells us this story of himself, so we must believe it. It is hard, however, to reconcile the good Bishop's views with the ideas of the early painters in the catacombs. Something had happened. The simple portraits drawn by the contemporaries of Christ and the Apostles, and cherished by their immediate friends and followers, true as they were to nature and to fact, seemed for the moment to be irreconcilable with the subtle definitions being formulated by the growing Church. The Church was surrounded by idolatrous practices. Whichever way the controversy as to the personal beauty

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of Christ might be settled, the Church could not suffer the Likeness to be treated as that of one more added to the many sons of the gods in the Pantheon of Rome. Theology was stronger than Art, and Art perished in the conflict. But not before it had left records which are unchangeable and imperishable.

Such is the array of the opinions of the Fathers as to the unlawfulness of preserving the Likeness of Christ. The thing may have been unlawful, but it was done. To say that it was not done because after it was done it was condemned, is illogical. To say that it was not done because it was forbidden, is to attribute to the artist a spirit of docility to which he has no claim. Such an argument is about as cogent as would be the contention a hundred years hence that paintings of the nude were not admitted to exhibitions of the Royal Academy in the nineteenth century because a distinguished Academician inveighed against them at a Church Congress! No artist would believe it, especially if he found some of the condemned pictures in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.

Now, the catacombs are, in effect, the Diploma Gallery of the early Christian painters, where we may see what they were doing eighteen hundred

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years ago, and discover what were their ideas upon the subject which was the light of their life and the crowning glory of their Art. And the very first thing we note is that these artists, living in the time of Christ and His Apostles, were before all things painters of portraits.

In the Text-Book on Classic and Italian Painting, by Sir Edward Poynter and Mr. Percy Head, we read that "From the time of Augustus to the time of Diocletian was the period during which true Roman Art, such as it was, chiefly flourished. Portrait-painting engrossed the energies of the most capable artists. Portraits were indeed produced in great abundance ; pictures or statues of eminent men were multiplied in public places and private collections ; and portrait-painters in this epoch are mentioned for the first time as a distinct class of artists."

The scene is Rome. The persons concerned are the early converts to Christianity. The time is when Paul, abiding in his own house for two years, is teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him. He writes affectionately to Timothy, sending salutations from Ebulus, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. It is inconceivable that none of these should have had any authentic knowledge of the face of Christ. It is still more inconceivable that they should have

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sanctioned the perpetuation of any representation of Him, knowing it to be untrue. The practice of portraiture was common amongst them. Christ had himself pointed to the likeness of Cæsar and based an argument upon it. Why should they have the likeness of Cæsar, and not that of the Master? The writings of the Apostles are absolutely silent upon the subject. Minute as are the instructions of Peter and Paul and James and John, in their Epistles, as to the management of the Churches, there is not a word to be found in any one of them forbidding to the followers of Christ this natural desire to look upon His face.

In the presence of facts like these, theological difficulties disappear. They came into existence, indeed, only in the second or third century, bringing with them a long train of elaborate symbols, familiar enough to us now, but which would have been sorely perplexing to the first disciples. We shall see presently that Christian symbolism was practically unknown to Christian Art in the first ages of the Church.

What, then, were these pictures in the catacombs? They began with simple portraiture, by Roman artists, who were members of the little community: portraits of the brethren; portraits of the Apostles; portraits of the Master. Is there anything strange in this? It goes on every day

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amongst ourselves. We see in our municipal galleries portraits of mayors and councillors who have served their city well. But the citizens would not accept these portraits if they were imaginary sketches made in London by artists who had never seen the men they desired to honour. We see sometimes round the neck of a woman a miniature of husband or father or mother or child. But it would not hang there unless it bore some resemblance to the dear original. And it is so with these portraits of Christ. They were sketches passed from hand to hand by the early Christians to remind each other of their Lord, or sent, as a newspaper is sent, to distant places to spread the light. They were pictures painted on the walls of the first places of assembly, to show to new disciples what the Master was like. They were ornaments worn round the neck, which recalled to their owners the face of their Friend and Redeemer. When the Apostles preached in the catacombs it must have been with these pictures looking down upon them. One seems to hear their very words. It is S. Paul who, with great boldness of speech, says, "We are not as Moses, who put a veil upon his face—which veil is done away in Christ;" and again, "We have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is S. John who says: "That which we have seen with our eyes,

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which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled—that declare we unto you—the Word of Life. No man hath seen God at any time ; but the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld His glory, full of grace and truth.” I do not say that these words were spoken before these pictures, but men who both speak and write find very often that the same words fall from their lips as from their pen. I do not say that S. John pointed to these pictures as he spoke. As works of art they were but poor, and the beloved disciple may have been a connoisseur in painting. They would have been sufficient for his purpose, however, if his desire was to show that, without derogating from the majesty of the Divine Being or materialising the spirituality of our conception of the Father, we might yet approach Him as little children without fear through the humanity of the Redeemer.

THE LIKENESS DEFINED

By the "Likeness" of Christ I do not mean the "likenesses" nor any one of them in particular—but the verisimilitude, common to them all, which was not invented by any of the great masters, but was adopted by them from earlier records.

BY "the Likeness of Christ" I do not mean one particular likeness as against another ; not the finest painting of Raphael as against the rude mosaics of the middle ages ; nor the Latin form as against the Greek ; and, particularly, I do not mean any individual gem, or other example that from its venerable antiquity or supposed origin may pretend to any special authority. What I mean by the Likeness of Christ is the Likeness that is common to all these ; the Likeness that painters and sculptors in all ages have had before their mental vision when they attempted to portray His image ; the Likeness that is known

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throughout the world, sometimes more perfectly, sometimes less perfectly rendered, to which we all unconsciously appeal when we think of our Lord in any act of His ministry, apart from any particular picture; the Likeness that enables us to recognise in any group of figures the face that is intended to represent the face of Christ; the Likeness that the reader of this book had in his own mind before he turned its pages, and knew only that its title was "Rex Regum."

We see this Likeness everywhere. In the statuary that adorns our cathedrals, in the painted glass of our parish churches, in our museums and picture galleries, in the coloured prints that hang in our schools, telling the children the story of His life. And we note at once, that it is common to every form of Art, and to every country in the world. Art is the one universal language that has never been confounded, and on this subject it speaks the same word to every people. Even the evangelists who carry Christianity to savage tribes have no need to translate the Likeness of Christ, as they have to translate His words. It is, at all events to-day, a fixed type. No painter would dream of altering it, nor of claiming it as an invention of his own. It is not necessary to argue that this Likeness is not a product of our own time; the paintings of Correggio, of Raphael,

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Of Da Vinci, of Titian, of Michael Angelo, carry its history back at once as far as to the period of the Renaissance.

And surely, if ever there was a period in the history of Art when this Likeness could have been invented, or evolved from the mind of the artist, it must have been the period of the Renaissance. From Giotto in the thirteenth century to Titian in the sixteenth, we have a roll-call of painters that marks the very highest level of attainment in religious art that the world has known. To which, then, of all these painters are we indebted for this supreme deliverance? Is it to the grace of Raphael, or to the imagination of Michael Angelo, or to the tenderness of Correggio, or to the pious fervour of Fra Angelico, or to the collaboration of all these that we must look for its real authorship? Ah, no! The Likeness of Christ was no more invented by any of these men than it was invented by Mr. Watts, or Sir E. Burne-Jones, or Mr. Holman Hunt. They found it already existing. They recognised in the long-established model something greater, something truer, something more divine, than they could themselves create. The painters of the Renaissance—men of marked independence of thought, men of strong national sentiment, Italians, Germans, Frenchmen, Spaniards—these men were

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content, in this the chief action of their lives, to lay aside their invention, their independence, their rivalry, their nationality, and to be at one in accepting humbly from other hands the Likeness of Christ.

Let us consider for a moment what this means. It is very easy for us, in the nineteenth century, to forego any claim to the authorship of the Likeness, for behind us stand the great array of painters from whom we inherited it. But who were behind these men, from whom they could have inherited it? When you look back beyond the fifteenth, the fourteenth, the thirteenth centuries, what do you come to? You come to a time when it is idle to ask which painter invented it. There were simply no painters who could have invented it. For a thousand years Art had been dead. And yet there was, as we shall see, during that time, existing in all its splendour, this living, speaking, authoritative Likeness of Christ.

MOSAICS OF THE BASILICAS

The Likeness had received the sanction of the Church in the mosaics of the Basilicas for more than a thousand years before the period of the Renascence.

I REFER, of course, to the mosaics of the ancient basilicas of Rome. The drawings in this chapter are from four of these, and date from the fourth to the seventh century. To the painters of the Renascence they were familiar—as they had been familiar to the populace of Rome ever since Christianity had been established. In all of them the Likeness is the same. What then is the position these mosaics take in the history of Art?

Sir Edward Poynter, than whom there is no higher authority, dates the extinction of ancient Art from the founding of the Eastern Empire at Constantinople, A.D. 330; and the awakening of Art in Italy from the time of Giunta of Pisa,

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MOSAIC.

(In the Basilica S. Paolo fuori le Mura.)

Guido of Siena, and Cimabue of Florence, in the thirteenth century. How then was the Likeness preserved and transmitted from century to century during that long, dark period? The mosaics of the basilicas are the connecting link. They date from the fourth century. As Italian art sank to its lowest level of decadence, Byzantine art grew in importance and supplanted it. But, in the words of the President, "Byzantine art, at first

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MOSAIC.
(In the Basilica of S. Pudenziana.)

not without qualities of beauty and grandeur, gradually became utterly rigid and lifeless under the hard conventionality that oppressed the artist. Direct appeal to nature was unknown; an artist selected his model, traced it, learned every detail by heart, and multiplied his mechanical copies wherever a representation of his subject was demanded. In all its most precious and subtle qualities each successive reproduction inevitably

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deteriorated. The same causes, however, which prevented improvement of the style saved it from extinction. An art for the most part mechanical was easily taught, and its plainly marked characteristics were not easily lost in passing from hand to hand, or from country to country. From the monasteries of Constantinople, Thessalonica, and Mount Athos, Greek artists and teachers passed into all the provinces of Southern Europe."

That is the history of Art during the ten centuries that lie between the age of Constantine and the Renaissance. It is a history that absolutely negatives the supposition that the Likeness of Christ, as received by the painters of the Italian Schools, was the result of a gradual development, or evolution, or modification during that period of an uncertain type of doubtful origin. It was really a traditional repetition of a fixed type, which the Byzantine artists did not dare to alter, but only desired to follow, because from the first it was held by them to be authentic.

It was in the year A.D. 306 that Constantine succeeded to the throne, embraced Christianity, and adopted the Cross as the Imperial ensign. The Christians were made free. The Emperor built many churches, and undertook a journey to Jerusalem to discover the Holy Sepulchre. He

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MOSAIC.
(*In the Basilica of S. Prassede.*)

erected a magnificent basilica at Bethlehem. At this time the Church was torn by the controversy between Arius and Athanasius. One triumphed for a time, and then the other. Subject to the caprice of Constantine one was always in banishment. But the final victory rested with Athanasius. In A.D. 325 the Nicene Creed was adopted and the Arians were condemned. It was during

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this period that the Likeness as seen in the basilicas was finally accepted by the Universal Church as the Likeness of Christ. But it did not originate then. As we shall see it came from still earlier records. It existed in frescoes by Roman artists; in enamels and mosaics imported from Byzantium; in pateræ of glass engraved with portraits of the Apostles; in pictures on linen which had been used as face-cloths for the dead; in a faint outline, drawn not by an artist at all, but evidently an attempt to delineate the features by one who was not an expert. These were the materials out of which the beautiful mosaics of the basilicas were designed—just as, in the Renaissance, they and the mosaics of the basilicas together were the materials out of which Raphael and his contemporaries designed their wonderful creations. The Likeness had never changed, but now it became stereotyped. For the difference between mosaic-work and painting is that the one is mechanical, the other is the action of a free hand. There is no brush-work in the mosaic, no touch of a master's hand, no infirmity of a false eye or doubtful vision. The design being complete, the tesserae can be counted as a child counts the stitches in a sampler; and though there may be good or bad workmanship, there is little room for the difference between good and bad Art so far as the worker is concerned. And the workers

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MOSAIC.

(In the Baptistry of Constantine.)

of these mosaics were copyists ; they learned the design by rote, and executed the Likeness as they had learned it. Only there could be no advance, no reaching out towards the infinite, no attempt to express passion.

It is to this limitation that we are indebted for the preservation of the Likeness during the ten dark and silent centuries when Art scarcely

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so much as existed. A distinguished writer indeed, who is quite sure that the face of Christ was soon forgotten, even by the Disciples, suggests as an explanation, that perhaps a veil was drawn over our vision lest we should be tempted to worship an image. How very small such a theory seems, when we realise the fact that so far from any providential dispensation having obscured the Likeness, the artists of the world were kept for a thousand years, copying and copying, and forever copying it—as children are kept to their copybooks—until the features of the Divine Master became so wrought into the very texture of the minds of men that they can never be obliterated.

With the illustrations to this chapter must be included the magnificent figure which stands as frontispiece to the book. It is from the church of SS. Cosma è Damiano, in the Forum, and dates from the sixth century. This colossal figure measures twelve feet in height. Sir E. Poynter counts the mosaics of this church as the finest examples of Byzantine art in Rome.

The mosaics from the basilicas of S. Prassede and S. Pudenziana are a little later in date: but they are drawn on the ancient lines, and are full of majesty and beauty.

The earliest of them all are those in the

MOSAICS OF THE BASILICAS

Baptistery of Constantine and the Basilica of S. Paolo fuori le Mura—both of which date from the fourth century.

I need scarcely say that the ravages of time have not left any of these mosaics absolutely unscathed; but the restoration of a mosaic is not to be compared with the restoration of a picture. Tesseræ may be displaced, and replaced, without materially affecting the design. There is no doubt that in looking at these figures of Christ, we see them as they were seen a thousand or fifteen hundred years ago by those who looked upon them for the first time. Serene, solemn, dignified, they possess some of the finest characteristics of Art. They are a priceless inheritance alike to the Christian and to the Artist. But they do not give us all that we ask from Art, or that Art can give, in the Likeness of Christ.

DIVISION OF THE CHURCHES

The Likeness existed before the division of the Churches in the time of Constantine, and was at that early date venerated as authentic.

WE have gone back, then, nearly sixteen hundred years, to find that the Likeness of Christ was then existing substantially as we know it to-day. Let us see if we can go a step further.

There are certain landmarks in history that it is of the utmost importance to observe, and the age of Constantine is one of them. Under his reign, ending A.D. 337, many and great changes occurred that did not fail to leave their mark both on Religion and on Art. At Rome the pagan temples were destroyed, or turned into basilicas for Christian worship. For the first time the new Faith was tolerated and encouraged by the State. Churches were built, and adorned with all the splendours that Art could lavish upon them. For

DIVISION OF THE CHURCHES

this purpose artists were brought from Byzantium, where also Constantine had destroyed the heathen temples, and established his seat of government. Thus there became two centres of authority in Christendom, a division that affected alike the formula of the Church and the vision of the Studio. In the Church this divided authority led to final separation. In the Studio it resulted in the prohibition by the Greek Church of the making of *zimages* of Christ, and in the sanction of His Likeness only in the form of *painting*. But both Churches still retained His Likeness, and in both Churches the Likeness is the same.

I say that in both Churches the Likeness is the same ; but there is one slight difference between the Greek and Latin pictures of our Lord that shows at once that they were derived from different copies—that the two Churches kept tenaciously each to the copy it had received and held most sacred—and that the copies thus independently avouched were alike. In the pictures with which we are familiar, and which come to us through the Latin Church, the hair is always divided evenly over the forehead in the form of an arch. It is the same in the Greek pictures, with the slight difference that in Greek pictures there is always a slender lock of hair detached from the rest falling in the centre of the forehead. On the following

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pages are two examples taken from the catacombs. One is the work of a native Roman artist ; the other is a relic of Greek workmanship that had been imported into Rome.



ROMAN TYPE.
(*In the Museum of the Vatican.*)

This traditional distinction between the Greek and Latin form of the Likeness is not of modern origin. It is, indeed, more marked in the earlier examples than in the later. What it practically demonstrates is :—that the Greek artists working in Rome found there a fixed type or model, held by the Roman Church to be authentic, and

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which they had to follow ;—that the model which they brought with them was practically the same—the same, that is, with the exception of the lock of hair ;—and that in executing their mosaics in



GREEK TYPE.

(*In the Treasury of S. Mark's, Venice.*)

the Roman basilicas they followed the requirements of the Roman Church which employed them ; while in the smaller examples of metal work and enamel actually wrought in Byzantium and imported to Rome, the distinctive characteristic of the Greek model was of course retained.

It follows then that in this early age of the

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Church there was in Rome a traditional Likeness,—known and recognised and held to be authentic; and that there was at the same time in Byzantium a traditional Likeness,—known and recognised and held to be authentic,—and that the two were indistinguishable from each other except by the slight accident of this lock of hair.

Now it is obvious that a traditional Likeness must of necessity be a thing of slow growth. Much change is scarcely possible within the span of a single life. Not a few individuals only, but communities have to be convinced—and that for generations, before such a tradition can be established. Moreover, the question of the verisimilitude of the Likeness of Christ was not even then a modern question. It was discussed by Christian writers long before the beginning of the fourth century. Constantine could not have been without his ideas on the subject. Helena, his mother, built the church of S. Prassede to enshrine a portrait she rightly or wrongly believed to have been actually drawn by an Apostle. When the workers in mosaic from Byzantium decorated the basilicas with the Likeness of Christ, they had to satisfy a people who believed devoutly in a Likeness they possessed, and with which they were familiar—a people who would have been no more content with a new invention to represent their Christ, than their forefathers would have been content to

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receive ideal heads from the Greek sculptors they employed, when they asked for portraits of their Cæsars. The traditional Likeness then existing in Rome may have been false or it may have been true; that we shall see presently. It is enough for my purpose now to show that there *was* a traditional Likeness, and that it is the same that crowns the triumphal arches of the basilicas to-day. The Church of Christ divides. East and West frame new creeds—new ceremonial observances—new systems of government. But the Likeness of Christ remains unchanged. From whence was it derived?

FRESCOES OF THE CATACOMBS

The Likeness existed in the catacombs during the first three centuries, and was painted over the graves of the martyrs by men who anticipated the immediate coming of Christ, and believed that they would recognise His face.

CLEARLY, it was derived from the catacombs. To the Christians, rejoicing for the first time in the sense of free citizenship and the protection of the State, the dark corridors of these underground sanctuaries were not half-forgotten memories of an age long past,—they were the record of the sufferings of yesterday. From the reign of Diocletian, their last persecutor, to the reign of Constantine, their first protector, was only three years. The pictures that covered the walls of the subterranean chapels and graves were familiar to their eyes; pictures, as I have said, of One doing the acts that Christ alone did, and bearing the attributes that Christ alone bore,—pictures that to

FRESCOES OF THE CATACOMBS



FRESCO.

(In the Catacomb of S. Callisto, Rome.)

them at least represented their Lord. What were these pictures like?

I think that the most beautiful—as it is at the same time the divinest and the most human—of them all is the Callistine portrait, reproduced on this page. The original is the size of life. I take it as the type of the Likeness in the catacombs. It is from the cemetery of S. Callisto, and appears to have been executed in colour; but the damp

REX REGUM

from the rock and the smoke from many tapers have done their work, and little is left but the beautiful outline of the divine face.

In this picture the Dean of Canterbury says that he can see nothing which could have suggested to artists of a later age their ideals of the Likeness of Christ—that he can perceive no common resemblance to it in the mosaics of the basilicas. Surprising as this statement seems it is explicable by the fact that the Dean has never himself seen the original. He admits that it has long ago practically perished, or at any rate has become indistinguishable. The hard, dry, almost brutally distinct woodcut that he gives us, and upon which he bases his comment, would inspire no one. The facsimile reproduced here, however, was made by Thomas Heaphy before the deadly effects of damp and smoke had destroyed this loveliest of all the remembrances of our Blessed Lord—which I believe to have been the work of a Roman artist, a portrait painter, who had himself seen Christ.

In laying so much stress upon the beauty and antiquity of this fresco, I must guard against the supposition that the authenticity of the commonly received Likeness depends upon any particular example. For the whole argument rests on that word—"commonly." It is the commonly received Likeness now—it was commonly received by the

FRESCOES OF THE CATACOMBS

painters of the Renaissance—it was commonly received by the mosaic workers from the fourth to the twelfth century—it was commonly received in the time of Constantine—and I am now showing that it was commonly received when the Chris-



FRESCO.

(In the Catacombs of SS. Achilli è Nereo.)

tians were driven to hide in the catacombs. The Callistine portrait is only one amongst many of the same kind which bear the common Likeness.

The drawing on this page, for instance, cannot be anything else than a portrait. It is from the catacombs of SS. Achilli è Nereo, and bears the unmistakable marks of portraiture—not portraiture of the highest class, but of such a kind

REX REGUM

as a Roman artist could accomplish who had himself seen our Lord, and painted either from memory or from an authentic model. It was



FRESCO.

(In the Museum of the Vatican.)

Painted in Rome, where Christ had never been, and where His followers were hunted down like dogs; but it was done by a Roman, for Romans who expected a portrait to be a likeness.

Three more of these frescoes shall suffice for this place. Their extreme similarity demonstrates their common origin. The first, on this page, is

FRESCOES OF THE CATACOMBS

taken from the catacombs and is now in the Library of the Vatican. It is the central figure in a group of Christ and the Apostles : and while



FRESCO.

(In the Museum of the Lateran.)

The face of our Lord is finished with the utmost care, the faces of the disciples, with the exception of S. Peter and S. John, are extremely slight and characterless. Mr. Heaphy attributes this to the desire on the part of the artist to give special emphasis to the features of the Master; but I believe it to have been because the features of

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the Master and of the two Apostles alone were known to the painter, and that he sketched in the rest, without any authoritative guidance, from his



FRESCO.

(In the Catacombs of SS. Achilli e Nereo.)

own imagination. The original is only a little larger than I have reproduced it here.

The subject of the picture is the Last Supper, and it is treated naturally,—as a record,—and not ideally, as a symbol. But the example on page 45—from the Museum of the Lateran—contains

FRESCOES OF THE CATACOMBS

distinct references to the visions of the Apocalypse and cannot therefore be of an earlier date than the end of the first century.

The last example I shall give is from the catacombs of SS. Achilli è Nereo. It is old amongst even these antiquities, for the wall upon which it is painted has been cut through—to the destruction of the picture of which it formed a part—in order to find a place of burial near to a martyr's grave. This could scarcely have been done within living memory of those who caused the picture to be painted; and yet the hands which destroyed the other figures were careful to leave untouched the face of Christ. Its great antiquity is evidenced also by the absence of all symbol. As in the Callistine portrait there is not even an aureole. The Likeness is most striking. But neither time nor circumstance seem to make any difference with the Likeness of Christ.

Before passing from this part of the question let me recall an argument I have already stated, and press it a little more closely. What was the purpose for which these likenesses of Christ were painted? They were painted over the graves of the martyrs, so that the face of the Redeemer might overshadow the place where they lay, until once more they should see Him as they had seen Him before they fell asleep.

REX REGUM

That these men had a clear perception of the Likeness of Him whom they should see when they awaked, is evident by the words of S. Paul. He appeals, in proof of the Resurrection of Christ to the accumulative force of the testimony of many witnesses. It is S. Paul who says :

He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve :

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once ; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

After that, he was seen of James ; then of all the Apostles.

And last of all he was seen of me also.

Now it is obvious that the testimony of these many witnesses would be of value only in proportion to the certainty and clearness of their knowledge of the face of Christ.

But perhaps they had forgotten ! And yet—Christ had told them to remember Him. Shall the Church say—We too have forgotten ? Then is only one step further that could be taken—that that would be to say, We never knew you.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

The Likeness existed during the first three centuries, not as a solitary example, but in countless numbers, and in almost every form of pictorial and plastic art.

THE pictures of Christ found in the catacombs are of many kinds. There are the frescoes, or mural decorations; the engraved chalices and pateræ of glass; the bas-reliefs, and mosaics, and enamel pictures, of Greek origin; and the cloth pictures—fragile shadows upon linen—that have probably been face-cloths laid upon the dead. Of each of these I give several examples, beginning on page 36. If the reader will turn back to that page I will enumerate them and define the class to which each belongs.

The drawing on page 36 is from a fresco, and shows the Latin type.

On page 37 is an example of Byzantine workmanship. It is an enamel on gold, executed in

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ENAMEL.

(In the Museum of the Vatican.)

low relief, and was worn as an ornament round the neck. The head is about an inch in size. It is now in the Treasury of S. Mark's, Venice.

The five drawings which illustrate the frescoes of the catacombs are all mural decorations, of the first, second, or third centuries. Three of them must have been painted before symbols were used—there is not even an aureole.

These, however, are only a few of the many

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES



MOSAIC.

(In the Museum of the Vatican.)

witnesses which speak in no uncertain language from the darkness of the catacombs. Two more will be found on the pages which now lie open. The first of these is of Greek origin, and was discovered beneath the foundations of the basilica of S. Maria in Trastevere, in the seventh century. In construction it resembles a cloisonné enamel; the outlines being made of slender ridges of metal, and the interstices filled with a vitreous composition

REX REGUM



ATTRIBUTED TO S. LUKE.
(*In the Museum of the Vatican.*)

exceedingly beautiful in colour. The drawing is about the size of the original, which is preserved in the Museum of the Vatican.

The mosaic profile is from the catacombs. It is said to have been the work of a pagan artist, and to have borne an inscription to the effect that the likeness was not satisfactory, having too much the appearance of a Greek philosopher.

The likeness on this page is one attributed to

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES



LIKENESS ATTRIBUTED TO S. PETER.
(*In the Basilica of S. Prassede, Rome.*)

S. Luke. It is painted in tempera, on wood, and the lock of hair falling upon the forehead indicates that it is of eastern origin. It is seen through a jewelled frame, which has the effect of a nimbus.

The beautiful drawing on this page is the likeness attributed to S. Peter—to enshrine which S. Helena, the mother of Constantine, built the basilica of S. Prassede.

Before commenting upon this picture I must

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again guard against the supposition that the argument for the authenticity of the Likeness rests in the very least degree on legendary stories of the origin of any particular portrait. Every one of these stories may be swept away, and the argument will remain the same. It is to the pictures themselves that I appeal, and not to any traditions as to their origin. I say this, not because the story associated with this particular likeness is incredible, but because it is unnecessary.

The story is that when S. Peter was a visitor at the house of Pudens, a senator of Rome, the daughters of Pudens—SS. Prassede and Pudenziana—asked him what the Lord was like; and that the Apostle, with his stylus, drew on the handkerchief of one of the sisters the simple outline which we see in this picture.

But there is another legend of a very different character, the legend of Edessa. The likeness on the opposite page is said to have been drawn by S. Luke, and sent by our Lord Himself to Agbarus, the King of Edessa, to recover him of his sickness. The history of this picture goes back at least to the middle of the second century, when it was believed to be authentic.

The first of these stories is not only possibly, but probably, true. The second is not absolutely incredible. But there is a third to follow, which is of the common stuff of which legends are gener-

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

ally made. It is the legend of S. Veronica. The story is so well known that I will dismiss it in a few words. It is said that when on the way to Calvary our Lord fell beneath the weight of the



VERONICA.

(In the Church of S. Bartolomeo, Genoa.)

cross, a woman—S. Veronica—moved with pity, gave Him her handkerchief, or herself wiped the sweat from His face ; and that thus the imprint of His features was left miraculously and forever on the piece of linen.

Again a piece of linen, the size of a handkerchief ; again the resemblance of Christ, but not

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painted by an artist ; again the early date as an essential element in the narrative. What does it all mean ? The answer is not far to seek, and it explains every difficulty of the case.



VERONICA.

(In the Church of S. Silvestro, Rome.)

There is no real mystery about these ancient relics. The Veronica likenesses, of which there are many, are simply face-cloths which had been laid upon the dead. These face-cloths were sometimes marked with the sacred anagram, or with some emblem of the resurrection. But there can be no doubt that in many instances the same

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

desire to identify themselves with Christ, and to express their hope and expectation of His second coming, that led men to paint His face over these graves, led them also to cover with it the faces



VERONICA.

(In the Sacristy of S. Peter's, Rome.)

of their beloved. The likeness attributed to S. Peter, and the one said to have been sent to Agbarus, may have been drawings made on linen for this purpose, but never actually used. They show no stains of the grave. But the two upon the pages which now lie open—from S. Silvestro and S. Peter's—have been darkened in the valley

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of the shadow of death. The darkness of a Veronica is really the imprint of a face—the dead face on which it was laid; the likeness discerned through the imprint is the drawing originally made on the cloth, and it is the Likeness of Christ.

These are a few of the many witnesses who say the same thing. Their evidence should be examined and cross-examined carefully. There are still more to follow; but these suffice to show at the very least that the Likeness which the Christians of the fourth century delighted to emblazon on their walls was not a new invention, but had been their consolation during the long dark period of their persecution. The pale, beautiful face that had overshadowed the graves of the martyrs, at last looked down on multitudes of worshippers in the stately basilicas; but it was the same face, and it had been hallowed to them in their adversity as it never could be in their hour of triumph. As Christ had been in the grave three days before His resurrection, so this verisimilitude of Him had been in the catacombs for three centuries before it arose to live for ever.

ACTUAL PORTRAITURE

*The Likeness existed before the use
of Christian Symbolism—side by side
with actual portraiture of the Apostles
and their contemporaries.*

THIS brings us to a very early period indeed of the history of the Likeness of Christ. We are within the catacombs, and we find it there. But how came it there? shall we lose it now in the darkness? or may we hope to trace it through the darkness till we once more reach the light? If we can do this we shall have reached the light that fell on Christ Himself.

From first to last in this argument I eliminate everything of the nature of myth, or legend, or tradition. I rely only upon evidence that I can verify with my eyes or accept from accredited historians. For instance, I feel sure that one of the first desires of the early converts at Rome must have been to know what our Lord was like. But I base no argument on this until I can show that they had that desire—that it was an innocent

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desire—and that the means for its fulfilment lay ready to their hands. All this I have shown. The desire is evident by the fact that they proceeded at once to cover the walls of the chambers



ENGRAVED GLASS FROM THE CATACOMBS.
(*In the Museum of the Vatican.*)

where they met for worship with pictures of Christ—the lawfulness of the desire by the total absence of prohibitory, or even cautionary, reference to it in the writings of the Apostles ; while the common custom of portraiture which prevailed at the time demonstrates that the utmost facilities were at their disposal.

But that is not all. It is quite certain that

ACTUAL PORTRAITURE

whether these disciples of Christ cared to preserve the Likeness of their Master or not, they cared to preserve their own. Here are two portraits which prove it beyond question. The one is of S. Paul,



ENGRAVED GLASS FROM THE CATACOMBS.

(In the Museum of the Vatican.)

the other is of his friend, Linus. They are facsimiles of engraved glass pateræ from the catacombs, now in the Museum of the Vatican. I have selected them from many examples of direct portraiture of men whose faces were familiar to the Romans of the first century, and whose names are mentioned in the Epistles. They show that portraiture (as distinct from symbolic

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or imaginative art) was not only lawful to, but was practised by the immediate followers of the Apostles.

Here then we find a people, accustomed to commemorate their heroes by portraiture, banded together in the worship of a new hero—a hero greater than any they had known before, and endeared to them by a stronger tie, that of love—one known personally to many of them, and of whose Likeness any of them could have obtained authentic information ; we see this people, driven to the catacombs, proceed at once to cover the walls, to engrave upon their sacramental vessels, to bury with their martyrs, pictures representing the life and actions and attributes of their hero. It is too much to ask us to believe that the Likeness they painted on their walls, engraved upon their chalices, and buried with their dead, was a sham.

I propose in this chapter to pursue a little further this question of the actual portraiture of Christ. One of the most singular objections that has ever been raised to the authenticity of the Likeness is the theory that in the earliest days of Christianity the belief in the Divine nature of Christ was so universal, so absolute, so overwhelming, that men did not dare to represent Him in His human form, but limited themselves

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to emblems or symbols. All this is formulated by Dr. Farrar, in a series of definitions of the stages in which he supposes that the Likeness was evolved. The Dean says that—

i. In the earliest stages of Christianity Christ was only shadowed forth symbolically, or *Ideographically*.

ii. He was next represented indirectly, and even by Pagan analogies.

iii. He was then set forth *Historico-symbolically* by Old Testament types.

iv. Then *Allusively*—by reference to New Testament parables.

v. Then *Ideally*—with no attempt to indicate His absolute semblance.

vi. It was only after several centuries that artists began to paint Him directly.

vii. By the eighth century—but not heartily or unanimously till then—the Church had learned to accept the views of S. John of Damascus—to paint Him, in colours as well as in speech, in pictures as well as in books.

How far all this is from the truth we have already seen in the mosaics of the basilicas, which date from the fourth century, and in the many pictures from the catacombs of still greater antiquity. But the theory is almost grotesque in its absolute inversion of the facts. It is based on two erroneous assumptions.

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The first assumption is that Christian Art was so dominated by the Jewish prejudice against any representation of the Divine Being that the artist was afraid to draw the Likeness of the Master. This is altogether over-estimating the influence of Judaism. The Art of the early Christians was Roman Art, and the artists were Roman artists, practising in their own country—the very last race of men to be affected by sympathy with Jewish tradition. If the influence of Jewish tradition ever reached the artists of Rome, it could only have been after long years of reconciliation to the thought that He whom they called Lord had come of the despised people. It is again too much to ask us to believe that upon the first preaching of Christianity a whole nation, accustomed from time immemorial to erect statues in honour of their gods or heroes, should hesitate to paint the face of a new Teacher, whether they believed Him to be God or man.

The second assumption is equally untenable. The full recognition of the Divinity of Christ by the people was not achieved in a moment. Rome was not convinced in a day, any more than was the Church itself. Gradually, as the teaching of the Apostles sank into the hearts of men, the sense of the awful presence of God with man, prevailed, and the free use of the Likeness of Christ began to be considered perilous. Then

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came the substitution of symbolism. Dr. Zerffi, in his "Manual of the Historical Development of Art," says :—"the homely simplicity of the early Christians is distinctly to be traced in the *absence of all symbolic decoration during the first two centuries*. Gradually they passed through the phase of geometrical ornamentation—triangles, circles, crosses, squares. Then came the adoption of emblems taken from the vegetable and animal world, until at last they revelled in symbolical eagles, crows, peacocks, doves, gridirons, pitchers, beehives, oxen, pigs, bulls, geese, violins, fishes—as the attributes of our Lord and of the saints." Sir Edward Poynter, in his chapter on Early Christian Painting, says, of the Callistine frescoes, that, "painted as they were by men whose religion was a secret, a thing apart from their daily life, and whose ordinary employment was probably to illustrate in Roman houses the popular and conventional subjects of Roman art, *these pictures naturally display little or nothing of the peculiarities of ideal and symbolism which distinguish the later Christian Art*." Schlegel says, in his Third Letter, that "theories founded on some imperfectly understood philosophical idea have been blindly adopted and dogmatically enforced. A very different and more successful result might have been obtained had people rather attempted to discover what was true by the aid of historical

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and traditional records. It appears highly natural that amongst the earliest subjects of representation should have been that which no effort of imagination could ever successfully achieve—the thorn-crowned head of the Redeemer. *The legend of S. Veronica attests the antiquity of that representation.*” St. John Tyrwhitt, in his “Christian Art and Symbolism,” says: “The great Christian symbol—the Cross—faces us *as soon as the catacombs are closed. No cross with the least pretence to antiquity occurs in the catacombs at all.* It may have been used in private before the time of Constantine; it probably could not have been used in public before he abolished the shameful punishment of crucifixion.” Dr. Farrar himself admits that *the earliest known reference to Christian symbolism is to be found in the writings of S. Clement*—not Clemens Romanus, the companion of S. Paul, but Clement of Alexandria—who died in the third century. But in the middle of the second century Tertullian had thundered against the Likeness, so that symbolism followed portraiture rather than preceded it. S. Clement advises that emblems should be used. For a signet ring he suggests the device of a dove, or of a fish, or of a ship, or of a man fishing—to remind one of an Apostle. S. Clement’s advice simply points to the perils of persecution—from which he himself fled. The denunciations of

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Tertullian, and the fury of Severus had taken effect, so that when S. Clement wrote, the use of symbol was becoming general, to the displacement of the simple portraiture which had been so dear to the first generation of converts.

How natural; how inevitable. The first generation of Christians had passed away. There was no one living who had seen Christ, or any of the Apostles. Now, any man who possesses portraits of a long line of ancestors knows well, however proud he may be of them, that the picture dearest to him of all, is that of the father or mother upon whose face he has looked. To the Christians of the second and third centuries the portraits of Christ were not of quite the same interest as they had been to the contemporaries of Christ and the Apostles, and when the question of the use of the Likeness came to be discussed they were ready to accept emblems, in the place of direct representations of a face they had never seen. I wish I knew what Hermogenes thought of it. Hermogenes was a Christian painter of the second century, and was denounced by Tertullian not only for practising the pagan art of painting, but also for painting for pagan patrons. Perhaps, as an artist, he clung to the Likeness, when the theologian wanted him to paint symbols. A little later Irenæus and Eusebius, as we have

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already seen, would have extirpated the Likeness of Christ from the Church of Christ if they could have had their way. And what would they have left to us? Symbolism. Instead of the face which we can love, and which they feared we should come to adore, they would have given us a Greek anagram, or a fish, or an eagle, or a lamb, things which all the world over have been adored, but which, whatever else we might be able to do with them, we could never love. Is symbolism then so safe an alternative to the true Likeness? It begins with these things; we do not know where it ends. The pagans were also symbolists, and chose to represent Christ by emblems. They also discarded His Likeness, and represented Him not by His face, but by the ass on which He rode.

The successive stages therefore of the use of the Likeness of Christ are—

- i. First, the simple portraiture common to the time of the Apostles, without symbol; the Likeness being that of a face well known to many witnesses, who needed no marks of identification.
- ii. Then the Likeness, together with some symbol, such as the sacred anagram, or an aureole, either as marking some Divine attribute, or as indicating to those who should come after, that it was the face of the Master.

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iii. Then the ascendancy of symbolism. The face that none of them had ever seen seemed too far off to hold men's hearts. It was a dangerous possession too in times of persecution. Moreover it was regarded with suspicion. Suspicion lest the insistence on the humanity of Christ might suggest questions as to His Divinity; or lest it should be accounted the image of God, and so lead to idolatrous practices.

iv. Finally, all these misgivings of timid souls having been removed or over-ruled—the Church made free under Constantine—the controversies respecting the Divine and human nature of Christ settled by General Council—this Likeness, which never had been lost, but only obscured by symbolism, was brought forth from the catacombs and emblazoned on the triumphal arches of the basilicas as a declaration in the sight of all men, not alone that it was the glory of Christian Art, but that it was to be cherished for ever as one of the essential elements in the evidences of the Christian religion.

I feel that the name of Tertullian has figured too largely in these pages. But the opponents of the Likeness have so placed him as a lion in the path, that the mere rattling of his chains seems enough to frighten some men from looking back further than the middle of the second century.

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Let us now venture to go clean past him, and see what really lies beyond. We know that he wrote against Art, and against Hermogenes the artist in particular; we know that he condemned the custom of engraving representations of Christ on the sacramental vessels. He may have been right or wrong in his views, but one thing is certain. The record of his condemnation of these things is at least a demonstration that they were then in existence. Let us now examine some of the likenesses of our Lord which Tertullian has certified to be of this very early date.

The drawing on the opposite page is from one of them. It represents Christ bringing again the Fruit of the Tree of Life. It was made as an ornament to be worn round the neck of a woman, and was taken from her grave. Her name was Eutychia. Of her—more perishable than glass—only a handful of dust remains. Poor little Eutychia. She did not go to sleep like Eutychus, when S. Paul preached too long a sermon. She lived to die for Christ, perhaps in the arena, and was buried with her favourite ornament upon her bosom, the only thing to comfort her during the long hours of waiting in the darkness. I have no doubt she liked the little glory round His head, and that emanated even from His body. Perhaps she cried over it, for women will cry, as

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Michael Angelo says, over things they love very much. Poor Eutychia, did I say? Ah! not so. On her grave are written these words: "Eutychia—happiest of women."



GLASS RELIC FROM THE CATACOMBS.
(*In the Museum of the Vatican.*)

One would like to see Eutychia. It seems certain that she cared to know what Christ was like, and to think that she would be quick to recognise Him at His appearing—an event she did **not** regard as so far off as we know it to be **now**. Perhaps He too knows what she was like, and will recognise her when the time comes. But

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for ourselves—Eutychia lived so very long ago—how can we expect ever to know her face? And yet—so strong was the habit, or custom, of portraiture amongst these early Christians, so facile were they in the art, that while the mortar was still fresh in the grave where Eutychia was laid—some hand—unknown to us—perhaps the hand that wrote the inscription—scored a profile on the wall that can be nothing else than Eutychia's portrait.

How many surmises there are in all this! yes—but the point is that they are all perfectly consistent with the known facts of the case. This likeness, found on the bosom of this woman may date from any year between the first preaching of Christianity in Rome, and the middle of the second century. It may have been given to her by Hermogenes the painter, or by the sleepy Eutychus, whose eyes Paul opened when they were thought to have been closed for ever—or by Paul himself. It is of the same material, and engraved in the same style as the portraits of that Apostle to the Gentiles. When we stand on holy ground, there is no telling what may happen. However that may be, the three medallions on the following pages are demonstrably of the time of the Apostles. They are of glass, engraved with lines filled in with gold. I have examined them very carefully

ACTUAL PORTRAITURE



GLASS PATERA.

(In the Museum of the Vatican.)

in the museum of the Vatican, where, through the courtesy of the late Cardinal Manning, I received great and special facilities for pursuing this study. Observe, in the first of them, the individuality of the heads. They are obviously portraits. But when were they done? Obviously again, while the men were living. They are not traditional imaginings of four saints. Three, indeed, are now called saints, but these must have been drawn before they were so called, while Damas (Who

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GLASS PATERA.

(In the Museum of the Vatican.)

was Damas ?) was one of them, and they were not differentiated by an aureole. No doubt John and Peter and Paul had preached or prayed in these dark chambers, and Damas may have taken the chair. This medallion is perhaps the record of their visit, and Damas stands with the other three, not knowing that while his name will be forgotten theirs will live for ever. But now turn to the second and third of these medallions, and you will see a strange thing. Again the figures are

ACTUAL PORTRAITURE



GLASS PATERA.

(In the Museum of the Vatican.)

portraits—S. Peter and S. Paul, Timothy and Justus. The four are treated alike. Over their heads are no aureoles ; but One is crowning them with the Crown of Life—or of martyrdom, it may be, for Paul was beheaded, Peter was crucified, and Timothy was stoned to death. The point is, that these likenesses were executed before the three were differentiated from the fourth as Saints, when the aureole was for Christ alone. See, then, what follows ! At that early date the One who

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awards the Crown of Life, or gives the martyr's palm, bears the Likeness we know to-day. And the artist, who thinks it necessary to write the names of Paul and Peter and Timothy and Justus over their portraits, does not think it necessary to write the name of Christ. Why? Because His face was so well known that no Christian amongst them could mistake it.

But how small are these tiny engravings! Surely they are a slender foundation upon which to build so mighty a structure as that of the Likeness of Christ through nineteen centuries. Now, it is in this smallness, this slightness, that the force of this part of the argument lies. It is not supposed that the masters of the Renaissance—to say nothing of the mosaic workers of the middle ages—rested on an outline so slight, an idea so falteringly expressed. They did not take the Likeness from these tiny heads; it was these that indicated to them which was the true Likeness. It was these that identified the larger pictures—painted on the walls, or wrought in mosaic, or faintly sketched on cloth—as real portraiture, and not exercises of the imagination. Imaginary likenesses are quite out of place while the original, or those who knew him well, are living. These minute outlines were made, not to show to strangers what Christ was like, but to be recognised by

ACTUAL PORTRAITURE

those who knew what Christ was like. That is a very different thing. The men who accepted these portraits of their friends—Peter and John, and Damas and Paul—would not have accepted a mock Likeness for the face of the Giver of the Crowns. It is not the crowning simply—the crowning by anybody—that they asked of the artist; it is the crowning by Christ.

These are a few only of many records still existing of the face of Christ as represented by the contemporaries and immediate followers of the Apostles. They take their place amongst the many witnesses, and make the accumulated evidence irresistible. If some of the witnesses speak only at second-hand—these speak directly. If others are tainted by association with superstitious legends—these are associated only with Peter, and Paul, and John, and the brethren. It is true that even amongst the brethren there were some whose eyes could not be altogether trusted. The two who journeyed to Emmaus did not recognise Christ even while He talked with them. What would have become of S. Paul's argument for the Resurrection if his appeal had been only to these two? And yet they were disciples. How gently S. Luke deals with them—he says their eyes were holden—ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο. But even these men saw at last; and though the

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recognition came too late for them to make amends to Christ, they rose the same hour, tired as they were from their journey, and returned to Jerusalem, a good seven miles' walk, that they might tell the eleven what they had seen. Can we believe that they ever again forgot what Christ was like?

But after all the argument does not rest upon numbers—if one petal can be found of the true substance, it proves the existence of the flower. And yet men are so slow of heart to believe things concerning Him. They tear the corolla to pieces, not knowing. Their hands are wet with the living sap, and they think it is only from dew that fell an hour ago. They pass through the catacombs, and observe paintings on the walls, by Roman artists, in the Roman style, of a Roman youth, a Fair Shepherd, an Orpheus, a David; and they say—These are imaginary pictures of Christ—these are not likenesses of Christ—we have no likeness of Christ—we have no likeness but that of Cæsar!

THE CONVENTIONAL CHRIST

The Likeness is not one amongst many—but is the only representation of our Lord that claims to be authentic, or has the characteristics of true portraiture: all others are confessedly imaginary.

I HAVE shown then, beyond cavil, that the Likeness of Christ with which the contemporaries of the Apostles adorned the catacombs, was the same that survived through the second and third centuries, and was in the fourth century transferred to the mosaics of the basilicas. But in the catacombs are found many representations of Christ that do not bear this Likeness in any marked degree; and many more that do not bear it at all. That, however, does not weaken the argument. It is the inevitable result of the pictures having been executed by different hands—some of them unskilled, some of them uninformed—and at intervals of time extending through

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many generations. The differences are for the most part such differences as a thousand children in our schools might make if they attempted each to draw a portrait of the Queen. They no more prove that we have not the Likeness of Christ, than such exercises would prove that we have no likeness of the Queen upon our coins.

But these variations in the representations of Christ found in the catacombs not only fail to negative my argument; upon closer examination they yield it very strong support. For had the artists, whose work they are, wrought each from his own imagination or ideal of what the face of Christ should be, there would have been almost as many variations as there were artists. But there are practically only two. There is the Likeness as we know it, of which I have been speaking throughout, and there is the representation of Christ as a Roman youth, bearing no marks that an artist can recognise as showing any attempt at portraiture. Under one or other of these two types all the pictures of the catacombs may be classified. There is no third type. The beardless lad, with crisp curling locks of which a drawing is given on page 81, or the solemn face we know, with drooping eyebrows, long masses of waving hair, and parted beard. If we have the Likeness of Christ at all it must be one of these.

THE CONVENTIONAL CHRIST

How then came the second type into the catacombs? That is one of the most interesting episodes in the history of the Likeness. To the



THE CONVENTIONAL TYPE—ROMAN.

early Christians it was not always safe to declare their faith openly by bearing upon their persons the portrait of their Master ; nor indeed would it have been prudent for the artists they employed to have identified themselves with the new sect by painting or engraving the Likeness of the Christ.

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The natural alternative was symbol. That which they could not venture to paint under the direct Likeness they painted in a form familiar to the Romans, artists and people alike. "Paint me now"—they would say—"Paint me now the leopards and the lions we saw yesterday in the arena—and in the midst of them one playing upon a harp." And thus Christ subduing the hearts of men, is typified in the form of Orpheus attracting the wild beasts with his lyre. Christ, whose word runneth very swiftly, is figured by David with a stone in his sling. Christ, as the good shepherd, is represented by a youth carrying a lamb across a stream. These were symbols—safe yet intelligible. But the *essential condition of them was that they should not bear the Likeness*. And so a type was adopted—a simple Roman type which Roman artists, taught in the great pagan schools, understood and followed. But side by side with it existed always the other type—the true type—the face at which Celsus scoffed as being too ugly for that of a god—which fewer hands could reproduce—but which the disciples loved, and in which artists to-day, as well as in the days of Constantine or the days of Raphael, recognise the characteristics of true portraiture.

The conventional type, however, is not necessarily without beauty: but its beauty is of a different

THE CONVENTIONAL CHRIST

kind. It is a beauty that, the nearer it approaches to perfection, the further it leads us from the knowledge of the real Likeness of Christ. It is not a



THE CONVENTIONAL TYPE—GREEK.

likeness at all: it is an idea. Amongst the loveliest of these conventional Christs, is one to be found in the Vatican. It is a fragment of church embroidery, of Byzantine workmanship, said to be the vestment in which Charlemagne was crowned. This however has been questioned: but for my

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purpose it matters nothing whether it dates from the eighth or the twelfth century. I give a drawing of it for the sake of showing the conventional type at its best.

But Christ in the catacombs is not always represented as one figure in a group, or as doing some action that will identify His person. We find among the oldest of the frescoes paintings of a face only—framed in a circle—like that on page 41. These were called *imagines clypeatae*, from *imago* a likeness, and *clypeus* a round shield. Such paintings—telling no story—could have no purpose except portraiture. Now the Likeness of Christ does sometimes appear in this form, but the face of the youthful shepherd never.

We have then two representations, but not two Likenesses of Christ. The one is a conventional rendering of a common Roman type, the other is the record left to us by the contemporaries of the Apostles. The loose reasoning which confounds the two, or assumes that one grew out of the other, is not a new thing. It existed in the centuries that followed the building and decoration of the basilicas, and it took the form of an attempt (i) to fuse the two into one; and (ii) to show a congenital resemblance between Christ and His Mother. S. Augustine, however, had already pointed out that while we possessed countless

THE CONVENTIONAL CHRIST

representations of the face of Christ, the face of the Virgin Mother was altogether beyond our knowledge. But in the beautiful young shepherd



THE DEBASED TYPE.

Art found the material for the assimilation of the two. The well-known head on this page, from the crypt of S. Cecilia, is the debased result. It has neither the strength of the man, nor the beauty of the woman, nor the innocence of the child. But it is a curious and interesting attempt to follow

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both types. There is no approach in it to anything like a third ideal. The folding of the hair across the forehead, and its falling in waves towards the shoulders, the drooping of the eyebrows, the width of the head about the level of the eyes, the long slender nose—these are taken from the true Likeness. The oval shape of the face is taken directly from the conventional figures to which I have referred.

It will be seen presently that this conventional form which originated when the early Christians were hiding from persecution in the catacombs has never been absolutely abandoned. It was repeated during the long period of Byzantine Art which followed, although the mosaic workers were decorating the basilicas with the true Likeness. Michael Angelo returned to it even while Raphael and Correggio, and Titian, and Da Vinci were looking straight into the Master's face: and in our own day at least one great painter clings to it still. Of these I shall give account in their proper order. But the conventional type neither is, nor does it for a moment pretend to be, the Likeness of our Blessed Lord.

A GOLDEN LINK

*The Likeness existed before the text
of the fourth Gospel was known to the
Christian community in Rome.*

IT is impossible to crowd into the brief space of this volume all the evidence that bears upon the subject and tells the same story. There is, however, one more point too interesting to be omitted. To find pictures and relics in the catacombs is not enough to prove that they date from the first age of the Church. Some portions of the catacombs are of course much earlier than other portions. It is true that, speaking generally, the graves of the martyrs are the graves of those who suffered through the long period of the ten persecutions, beginning almost immediately after S. Paul's last visit to Rome, and ending about the close of the third century. But after the establishment of the Christian Faith the Christians still resorted to the catacombs, and though some of the

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galleries were closed in the fourth century, there are many relics to be found of a date later even than that. These, however, may be dismissed from the argument. From the time when the Likeness of Christ was emblazoned on the walls of the basilicas, in the sight of all men, it is a matter of course that those who desired to decorate or hallow their graves with the Likeness would take it from the acknowledged renderings sanctioned by the Church. Our concern is only with the graves of the martyrs of the first three centuries. These again must have been of various dates, ranging through the first, second, and third centuries. Are there any indications by which we can determine which are the earlier and which the later? I think there are.

To this point the sequence of my argument has been direct and unbroken. Now, however, for the sake of those who have never explored the catacombs for themselves, I must turn aside for a moment to describe very briefly the place where these relics of the early Church were found.

The catacombs are long underground passages, just high enough to walk through without stooping—just wide enough for one person at a time to pass. They are of such vast extent that an army of more than a million soldiers might be hidden in them. Now, indeed, they are for the most part

A GOLDEN LINK

closed with walls of masonry, only a very limited portion remaining accessible to visitors—and that portion despoiled of its ancient treasures. I do not say this as a reproach to the authorities : these priceless relics can be better cared for and more safely guarded in the museums of the Vatican and the Lateran than if they had been left *in situ*. Moreover, from time to time unexplored galleries are opened, with all the possibilities and hope of new discoveries.

As soon as our eyes have recovered from the almost blinding light of an Italian sun, we perceive that at each side are recesses, cut out of the rock horizontally, and arranged one over another very much like the berths of a ship. These narrow shelves are the graves of the martyrs. From time to time, as you thread the labyrinth of passages, you come upon larger chambers, where the first Christians gathered for worship.

It was here that the Church found refuge during the terrible persecutions of the Roman emperors. It was here that the faithful listened to the preaching of the Apostles. It was here that in the last extremity they made their place of burial.

The walls are covered with frescoes such as I have already described, and with innumerable inscriptions and quaint symbols. As we pass through the endless corridors, and our eyes grow accustomed to the darkness, we seem to be moving

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with a dim procession of many figures. A dim procession—*aere cavo clypeus*, as Virgil calls them—shadowy forms like those on pages 41 and 46, not things *excudere aera spirantia*, beaten brass to the life. A dim procession but not voiceless, for the inscriptions read like echoes of the old hymns of faith and hope and love still lingering round the forsaken shrines.

But it is within the graves that the relics of glass, of which I have said so much, are found. To understand them we must consider the mode of burial practised by these early Christians.

On one of the narrow shelves cut in the rock would be laid a surface of fresh mortar, and upon this the body—in some cases the torn fragments of the body—would be placed. The impress of the limbs and even the texture of the garments upon the mortar are still visible, though the bodies have long since crumbled to dust. Then, before the grave was closed, it was usual to place near the head the sacramental cup that had been used in life. These cups—or *pateræ*—were made of glass, and bore upon them, engraved beneath the base of the cup, emblems and figures relating to the Christian Faith. Placed thus, on the fresh mortar, they would sink a little by their own weight, with the result that while, during the long ages that followed, the fragile glass, corroded by

A GOLDEN LINK

the atmosphere, fell into disintegrated filaments—flakes of dust that one can blow away with a breath—the base of the cup remained hermetically sealed, and thus preserved to tell its beautiful story.



GLASS RELIC FROM THE CATACOMBS.
(*In the Museum of the Vatican.*)

And what is the story these pateræ have to tell? If you take one of them and carefully strip away the mortar that still clings to it, you will find in gold—the Likeness of Christ.

The relics we have already examined are of this description. From the actual portraiture we find upon them of the Apostles we infer that they are

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of the age of the contemporaries of the Apostles. From the association of the Likeness of Christ with this actual portraiture we infer also that the Likeness of Christ was portraiture.

But there is yet one more of these glass pictures to be considered, and it points to the same conclusion by an entirely independent chain of reasoning. The inference in this case arises not from the deliberate intention of the artist, but from an accident or fault.

The figure on page 91 represents our Lord turning the water into wine. But it will be observed that the water-pots are seven in number, whereas in the sacred text they are stated to have been six.

Now here is a strange thing. This miracle of the changing of water into wine is mentioned in only one of the four Gospels, that of S. John—the very Gospel that modern criticism declares to be of a late date. Does our chain of evidence snap here? I think not: let us look a little further.

We turn from this picture to others which surround it, and what do we see? We see Christ and the woman of Samaria, Christ as the Good Shepherd, Christ as the True Vine, Christ raising Lazarus; and we note that all these subjects are named only in S. John's Gospel.

But here is a thing more strange. We see no representation of the Nativity, or of the Trans-

A GOLDEN LINK

figuration, or of the Ascension, and we note that these events are described only in the Synoptic Gospels and not in the writings of S. John. Now S. John had preached in these catacombs long before he wrote his Apocalypse in Patmos, or his Gospel at Ephesus. Is it conceivable that he should not have narrated to the brethren these reminiscences of the Master? The inference is irresistible.

1st. That these paintings, thus limited to the writings of S. John, were executed by men who had a special regard for his teaching; otherwise it is inexplicable that the choice of subject should be limited to his narrative, to the exclusion of the most transcendent incidents of our Lord's life.

2nd. That this particular picture was executed before the actual manuscript of S. John's Gospel was received by them; otherwise it is inexplicable that the symbolism of seven should have overridden the sacred text.

But this example again is one that beyond cavil bears the Likeness of Christ.

THE CHAIN COMPLETE

The evidence of Art, of History, and of Archæology, unite to show that the Likeness came within the knowledge and sanction of the Apostles as the real Likeness of Christ, their Friend and Master.

THE chain of my argument is now complete ; but there are still a few links that can be strengthened. I have classified the relics from the catacombs under four general heads, and have given a number of examples of each. The frescoes, the engraved vessels of glass, the mosaics and enamels and metal ornaments, the cloth pictures, all give independent witness to the authenticity of the Likeness of Christ.

The frescoes are the expression of what I may call the Roman mind upon the subject. They were executed probably by Roman artists of various degrees of talent, and are not trammelled by the exigencies of the workman's craft, either as to

THE CHAIN COMPLETE

size or manner ; they allow more play, therefore, to the imagination and genius of the painter. And yet they show the same restraint, the same limit to two types—the real portrait when they knew it and dared to paint it—the conventional youth when they were ignorant of the true Likeness or did not dare to paint it.

Then the small mosaics and metal ornaments of Byzantine workmanship give similar evidence. They come from a different source. Byzantium—at first the ally of Rome, then laid in ruins by Rome, and then rebuilt by Rome—had its own traditions of Art, inherited from Greece. It had also its traditions of the new Faith. As the art-school of the world it yielded to Rome these examples of its art-craft. And looking at them now we perceive that Roman and Greek were absolutely at one in their rendering of the Likeness of Christ.

The glass pictures give their special testimony. It is known beyond doubt that the early Christians engraved on their Eucharistic vessels representations of the Good Shepherd. Tertullian, writing in the second century, refers to these expressly. Moreover the use of glass for sacramental cups was forbidden at a very early age of the Church. If, therefore, we find glass cups and ornaments in the graves of the martyrs, in the most ancient portions of the catacombs, and that they are

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engraved with figures of the Good Shepherd, of Christ bringing the fruit of the tree of Life, of Christ turning the water into wine, there is no room for doubt that they are the vessels to which Tertullian referred, and that they are of a very early date indeed. We do find these cups and ornaments; we do find them engraved with these representations; and in some instances, though not always, these representations bear the true Likeness. Those which I have selected for illustration, though of necessity minute in size, are clear and unmistakable. No artist in the world looking at them—without reading a word that I have written here—without knowing whence they came—would hesitate for a moment in recognising in them the Likeness of Christ as we know it to-day.

But they are so small—these glass and metal ornaments. Can these minute things have been sufficient to have determined the course of Art for succeeding centuries? Then the cloth pictures give their witness. The cloth pictures are life-size. It matters not whether the cloth pictures, or the glass pictures, are the most ancient; they existed together and interpret each other. If the glass pictures are the most ancient, the cloth pictures confirm their authenticity. If the cloth pictures are the most ancient, they also must date from the time of the contemporaries of Christ.

THE CHAIN COMPLETE

In looking back over what I have written I feel that the argument is not so much like a chain, which, if a link be broken, will part. It is more like a cable of many strands. If a strand is cut, the cable is no doubt weakened ; but its strength is not altogether lost.

It will be seen that the evidence bearing upon the subject is of three kinds—historical, archæological, and artistic—and that these again give united and independent testimony to the authenticity of the Likeness.

History speaks to its truth. The practice of portraiture by the early Christians ; the written records of the persecutions fixing the date of their martyrdom ; the references of ancient writers to certain pictures ; the treasuring of these pictures supposed to be authentic ; these things lead us to question whether it is possible that of all the leaders of men in that era, Christ was the only one whose likeness nobody cared to preserve.

Then, Archæology finds this Likeness in the mosaics of the basilicas. Many of these have been defaced and restored, but the restoration of a mosaic is not like the restoration of a painting, and enough remains to assure us that nothing material has been added to the Likeness even by the hand of Titian or Raphael. But we search further, and we come upon the relics of the catacombs—the frescoes, the glass vessels, the metal ornaments,

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and the cloth pictures—and we find there, under all these forms and conditions of Art, the same Likeness of our Lord.

In how many instances, and in what degree of perfection, are questions not so much for the historian or the archæologist as for the artist to determine. But Art is not one of the exact sciences. In Art there is room for wide differences of opinion. Artists may err in their judgment. I know all this, and yet I know also that if in a question like this the artist is at fault, there is no higher appeal. But the artist does not speak wildly or without knowledge when he estimates the drift, and characteristics, and limitations, and development, and decay of different schools—or the different results arising from the free handling of the brush or from the cramped manipulation of the tesseræ of a mosaic.

And the first thing noted by the artist is the astonishing unity which prevails throughout the world with regard to the acceptance of this Likeness—astonishing, that is, to those who do not believe in its authenticity. This of course calls for some explanation; and explanations have accordingly been offered. One popular writer says that Art has been misled by perverted religious teaching, and that the attempt to wander hand in hand with conventional orthodoxy has but helped to lead it further astray. He sees in the Christs

THE CHAIN COMPLETE

of the Spanish school the taint of pestilence from the horrible blight of the Inquisition ; while on the other hand he perceives in the Christs of the painters of Germany only the expression of gentleness and suffering. This is a very superficial view of the question. The minute realism of the German and Flemish schools lends itself more readily to the expression of physical pain than does the decorative method of the painters of Spain and Italy. Moreover, the mood of a painter is controlled rather by his individual temperament than by his nationality. Murillo, the Spaniard, was by no means an ascetic—his Madonnas and Child Christs are amongst the sweetest and most tender of religious pictures—whereas some of the most ghastly and agonising representations of the sufferings of our Lord have come from the courageous pencils of the German reformers. There is in the British Museum a drawing by Albert Dürer of the face of Christ so terrific in its realisation of the anguish of thirst endured by Christ upon the cross, that the memory of it haunts me even as I look at the serene mosaics of the basilicas or the beautiful frescoes of the catacombs. But even if the statement were true it would explain only the diversity—which needs no explanation—leaving the tremendous fact of the unity as great a mystery as ever. It is said again, by the editor of an ecclesiastical

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text-book, that the Likeness of Christ grew up gradually during the middle ages, beginning with the poor rudimentary suggestions of it in the catacombs, and developing to its full splendour in the hands of the Byzantine mosaic workers from the sixth to the ninth century. That theory I have disproved: but if it were true it would not account for the unity. For if the Likeness came by process of evolution, it would have developed differently among different peoples. Look at the examples on pages 41 and 26, and compare them with the one on page 85. That on page 41 is from the catacombs of the second century; that on page 26 is from a mosaic of the fourth century; that on page 85 is from a mosaic of the ninth century. But the artist has no difficulty in determining that the change is not the result of growth or development. It is the result of deterioration and decay.

It would scarcely be possible to anticipate every misunderstanding. There is, however, one false conception current that should be noted. In some minds the meaning of the words *likeness* and *portrait* is confused. There may be a likeness in a picture that is not a portrait; there may be a portrait in which there is no likeness. It is said sometimes, "Oh! but I thought the hair should be longer, or darker, or lighter," as the case may be. But the likeness of a man or woman is some-

THE CHAIN COMPLETE

thing apart from the colour or method of arranging the hair. The long waving hair, so characteristic of the pictures of our Lord, does not affect the question of the Likeness, except that repetition of it from generation to generation through eighteen hundred years is evidence of the faithfulness with which the Likeness has been transmitted. Again, it is said, "The Likeness I prefer is more sad, or more stern, or more gentle." But *likeness* is not to be confounded with *expression*. The expression that a great painter will give to the Likeness of Christ is quite apart from the Likeness itself. In this, Raphael, and Titian, and Correggio will differ, as they differ in the excellences of their genius. I suppose the expression on our Lord's face must have changed from time to time. Yet the Likeness would have remained unchanged.

Of the bearing of this great subject on Art, I shall speak in the following chapters, in which I propose to trace its history through the Renaissance to our own day. But I shall deal with it solely as it affects the Studio. It is no part of my purpose to enter upon any theological controversy, nor to urge the acceptance of any particular religious views. Every artist who cares for Christ, as well as every Christian who cares for Art, is interested in the question of the authenticity of the Likeness. If it is authentic—if it is indeed the verisimilitude

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of the Redeemer—it is for Religion rather than for Art to determine what place it should take in the economy of the Christian life. But truth must reign supreme alike in the Church and in the Studio.

Now as the borderland between History and Religion is myth, so the borderland between Art and Religion is legend. My purpose is to make the landmarks a little clearer and more certain. The miraculous Virgins that wink, and the black Christs that are said to have fallen from heaven—these things do not add to our knowledge. Let them not, however, by exciting derision or prejudice, rob us of the knowledge we do possess. Truth is always wronged by being wrapped in mystery. But this is a plain question that should not be confused by tremors of apprehension or bias of prejudgment. The Likeness of Christ is neither the evolution of an ecclesiastical idea, nor the beautiful dream of some great painter? I have shown that it is the real Likeness of a real Man.

TO-DAY

TO-DAY



THE TWO RECORDS

We possess two Records concerning Christ—the record of His Words in Literature, and the record of His Likeness in Art.

A THOUSAND years have passed since the time when Constantine bringing the Likeness of Christ from the darkness of the catacombs emblazoned it upon the walls of the basilicas, in the sight of all men. The Likeness has remained without change, but Art has entered upon a new life.

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man : for thou regardest not the person of men.

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Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

How interesting this must be to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It sets forth the first duty of a citizen so very clearly. Yes, but it is interesting to the artist also. It is the great arbitrament between the claims of his Art and of his Religion. When he has paid his share of the taxation of his country, he has still tribute to render to God and to man. Worship, obedience, affection, are due with discriminating regard to laws Divine and human. Our Lord's words teach us to distinguish between these laws. As the Son of God—He seems to say—as the Son of God I claim all that the Father hath given me—your souls, your obedience, your love, your worship, for I and my

THE TWO RECORDS

Father are one. As the Son of Man I claim all that I have inherited from my mother—your hearts, your affection, your loyalty, your brotherhood : for I am meek and lowly in heart. Remember me. I do not say remember me as the Judge who will separate the sheep from the goats—there is another word for that—I say, remember me as the Shepherd of the flock, who carried the lambs in his bosom. But how can we remember unless we have a record ?

Now, as the record of the Words of Christ comes to us through Literature, so the record of the Likeness of Christ comes to us through Art. Imperfect records they are, both of them, and liable to be abused. An ambiguous word, a faulty manuscript, a printer's error, may corrupt the meaning of a whole chapter. And in like manner, for Art is only another form of language, a questionable touch, the use of a defective material, an accident of workmanship, may mutilate or disfigure a likeness. But happily our knowledge of the sacred text does not rest on any one manuscript. There are various readings, from which, by patient labour and critical acumen a trustworthy recension may be made. And it is the same with the Likeness. It is no solitary portrait on which we have to rely. The strength of the evidence of its authenticity lies in the multiplicity

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of examples, and the variety of forms in which we find them. Frescoes the size of life, minute engravings on glass, cloth pictures from the graves of the martyrs, mosaics, bas-reliefs—every form of Art practised in the time of the Apostles—yields contributory evidence. There are, of course, legendary pictures, as there are spurious gospels and epistles: but these things, whether in Literature or Art, are met in the same way, by criticism, and do not take away from the truth of things proved to be true.

It will be seen that in all this I am not drawing any comparison between the relative value of the two records. The record of the Words of Christ may transcend the record of the Likeness of Christ, as the Divine nature transcends the human; and yet they may both be true. The question of the importance of the record is quite apart from the question of its veracity. The authenticity of the Likeness claimed by the artist is the same as that claimed by the scholar for the *text* of the Gospels. But it is supported by evidence more direct, and of greater antiquity. The words of our Lord were spoken in Aramaic, the popular language of Palestine, but they are recorded by the Evangelists in Greek: so that before they were set down in writing at all, they had undergone one process of translation. Thus not only are the

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actual words absolutely lost to us, but the literary necessity of the reconstruction of every sentence in another tongue, must have intervened between the sayings of Christ and the pen of the writer. The equivalent in Art would be that four Likenesses should have been painted from memory, a matter of no difficulty to the practised portrait painter, that the original paintings should have been lost, and that we should possess copies. In their initiation, therefore, the two records stand upon the same ground. But with regard to the Words of Christ, how many times has this process of translation, or copying, taken place before they reached us. The most ancient Greek texts known are the Codex Sinaiticus, and the Codex Vaticanus, both of the fourth century, and written in uncial characters, that is, without punctuation or division of words, and in part without accents or breathings. Do we, therefore, fling them away as not authentic? Surely, if the recension of the sacred text is a tribute from the scholar to Christ the Son of God, the recension of the Likeness is a tribute from the artist to Christ the Son of Man.

EVIL DREAMS

*Either of these records may be
abused by Superstition, but safety lies
in the truth of the record.*

WHAT the Words of Christ are, therefore, to Literature—the Likeness of Christ is to Art. It is a birthright and an inheritance that the artist will not sell for any mess of pottage.

It is, however, just when Art in assuming the beautiful garments of religious symbol appears in its supremest beauty that it incurs also its extremest risk.

So long as Art is true to its legitimate purpose, the setting forth of the glory of the Creation, so long its association with religion cannot but purify, and strengthen, and elevate,—purging it from its contact with evil, invigorating it with the passion of human life, lifting it to the contemplation of the life Divine.

But the moment that Art ceases to reflect, and assumes to partake of the Divine nature—it dies.

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Arrayed in royal robes it may be—but it dies. Sitting upon a throne it may be—but it dies. It dies as Herod died, even while the people are yet shouting that it is a god.

How indeed could it be otherwise? It is impossible at the same time to recognise the true glory of a work of Art, and to attribute to it a supernatural origin. That which is a representation cannot be also the thing itself. The antique statues which we so highly prize as works of Art were made to adorn the temples of the gods; but they were not worshipped. It is not in the study of High Art that men become idolaters. It was just when Greek Art culminated in these beautiful statues that Socrates was leading his disciples to think of the higher life and of the spiritual nature of the Divine Being. It was just when Raphael and Correggio and Da Vinci were filling the world once more with beauty that the Reformation burst forth in Europe. And it is just in those countries where there are *living* Schools of Art that Art is least used for superstitious purposes.

In the days of Phidias, as in the days of Angelo, men knew very well whence their statues came—from the studios of their artists. Art was already in its decadence when the images became seized with the strange habit of falling down from heaven.

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Whether this decadence led to, or was the result of a superstitious use of Art, is another question ; but it is of vital moment to the lovers of Art to know that superstition and High Art cannot exist together. Either the art must become so debased that there shall be no glory in it for the artist to inherit, or the people must become so brutish that they cannot recognise the hand of a genius. The image of the great goddess Diana of the Ephesians, for whom Demetrius made silver shrines, is so monstrously deformed that it cannot be reckoned as a work of art at all. The Black Virgin at Chartres, to which pilgrimages are made from all parts of the world, stripped of its jewelled vestments and its crown, is but a shapeless doll. These are the images which men worship : but works of High Art, never ! These are the statues which fell down from heaven ! Did they ? If so, it is a matter for grave wonder that the sculptors up there were not better skilled in their craft. There is no artist among men who would acknowledge them as his work. They must have been cast out because they were so ugly. But is there in the wide world an example of a masterpiece in Art to which any supernatural virtue is ascribed ? I know of none. And yet it is not that Art cannot, or ought not, to touch such themes. There are pictures of the Blessed Mother so pure, so tender, so exalted, that we cannot worship them—we

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cannot, because they are true—true, that is, to our highest conception of womanhood. These paintings work no miracles ; to them no prayer is made ; in their honour no sacred rites are performed ; we can only look upon them, and thank God that such men as Raphael and Angelo have lived to paint them.

But as Art cannot suffer from its contact with true Religion, so Religion cannot be blasphemed by true Art. And yet what strange distinctions have been drawn, by the scholastic theology which too often usurps the place of real religion, with regard to the use of Art for religious purposes. For example, the Latin Church sanctions the use of images and pictures ; while the Greek Church condemns the image as an idol, but carries the picture in solemn procession. This is a nice distinction—and to simple minds seems very much like the splitting of straws. But let us look at home. We flatter ourselves that we have cleansed the temple of God because we have cast out both statuary and painting. But is it so ? Are these the only forms in which Art can give a false presentment of the Divine Being ? I think not. A danger lies before us also, I will not say greater than that against which we rightly guard, but a danger all the more real because we take no heed of it at all.

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I refer to the freedom with which the Poet does that which is forbidden to the Painter or the Sculptor. The Sculptor is not to bring his crucifix into our churches, although it is a simple record of a fact. The Painter is not to show us the Master walking upon the waters, though the waves be painted from the Lake of Galilee, and the face from the real likeness of the Master Himself. But the Poet—yes! He may picture for us a Being clothed with what he conceives to be the attributes of God, and casting it into verse—not a picture, not an image, that were idolatry—but into the form of verse, he may then present it before us for our actual worship. It is not alone in ivory, or silver, or stone, or wood, that images can be made. Shakespeare created King Lear, yet he was not a sculptor. It is not alone on canvas that untrue or incomplete representations of the Deity can be given, but in hymns, and prayers, and sermons, and creeds; in any and every form of Art, of which words are the manifestation. This is a danger, real, and close upon us. How much has Art to answer for in this, the commonest method of making an image? How many are there who think that they have cast away God, while they have really never seen Him, but seen only some strange presentment of Him through the distorted imagination of an enthusiast. It is said to have been a favourite expression of Strauss in com-

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mening a demonstration, "I will now proceed to construct God." The words appal us with their apparent brutality. Yet what are they but the repetition in the lecture-room of that which our great poets and divines have always done unchallenged? Is it for an Alexandrian bishop only to define the Deity?—or for an English Puritan to portray the "Eternal Father?" But were these words used only in derision, or had they a deeper meaning, namely, that anything which man can construct cannot by any possibility be divine? If the Professor had been content to hold before our eyes some Pasht from India, or some Bambino from Italy, his satire would, for Englishmen at least, have fallen pointless. Its sting for us lies altogether in this, that in his "construction" he used only—words.

Do I speak too strongly? Again I think not. Turn for a moment to the Hymnals commonly used in our churches, and what do we find?

"There is an eye that never sleeps
Beneath the wing of night;
There is an ear that never shuts
When sink the beams of light."

And thus God is "constructed" for us,—as a bird—a colossal bird—but a bird without the loveliest characteristic of the feathered tribe, the

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trustful hiding of its head under its wing—a bird that always keeps its eye open. But read a little further :

“ There is an arm that never tires,
When human strength gives way : ”

—an arm is a strange development for a bird ;—but that is not Art—that is Poetry ! It approaches no nearer, however, to a true conception of God than does Dante’s conceit of an ever-changing, luminous subsistence of three circles, threefold in colour, but of one dimension.

It may be that some minds are so constituted that they can form no conception of the nature of the Divine Being except through a definite description of something material—something which they have seen with their eyes. To such minds the ascription to God of human passions may be more misleading than the ascription to Him of the human form. For, after all, while the verbal presentment which we sanction is inevitably false, because it is an anthropomorphic rendering of that which is not human but supernatural and infinite, the material presentment which we condemn is true as far as it goes. True, because it deals with the real likeness of a real man. We have seen already that our knowledge of the face of Christ is not the result of the genius of any of the great painters of the Renascence ;—that for

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more than a thousand years before these men pondered over it—while the Heathen were still raging, and the Kings taking counsel together—this Likeness was known and treasured ;—that the early Christians were not less careful to preserve the Likeness of the Master than were the Romans to keep the likeness of the Cæsar to whom He rendered tribute. In taking our nature upon Him, Christ gave us the right to look upon His face.

And yet the commandment stands. Let us see to it that we do not transgress. He who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, will not be worshipped through an image, even though it be an image of Himself.

And yet the right remains. Let us see to it, lest, in refusing to look upon His face, we deny Him as the Son of Man.

But the higher the subject-matter may be with which Art has to deal, the greater is the peril of any deviation from the truth. Perhaps in giving us this likeness of Himself, while still forbidding us to worship Him through any image, it is the will of Christ that we should take Him to live with us, not upon our altars, but within our homes. It is quite certain that if any idolatrous use has been made of this likeness, such use has always been associated with the false representation

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rather than with the true. It is not the "Ecce Homo" in our National Gallery, or the beautiful head that sanctifies our dwelling-house, that has stood between us and God. They only win from us, and for us, a few happy moments of love and reverence towards One who is too often absent from our thoughts. It is around the crucifix that the superstitious uses of Art are crowded. And observe, in the former case the representation is true; in the latter it is historically and physically false. Physically false, because it is impossible for the pierced feet and tender hands to sustain, with calm outstretched arms, the weight that would drag down the body in intolerable anguish. Historically false, because Christ did not mock us, as Shelley suggests, by the appearance only of suffering. In vain do we look with wistful eyes towards Palestine; a few miles of surf breaking upon our English coast is all that we can see. In vain do we turn to the files of our oldest journals; like a chain snapped close to our hands they fail us here. There were no correspondents of the press to send sketches of the events that were then transpiring beyond the blue waters of the Mediterranean. There were no statues erected to His honour by an admiring public; there were no coins bearing His superscription; only His friends, as we have seen, cared to preserve the likeness of their Master. And, without exception,

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these representations of Christ are representations not of His humiliation, but of His glory. It is Christ turning the water into wine : it is Christ blessing the bread : it is Christ raising Lazarus. But Christ upon the cross—not that, anything but that. We have no true picture of our Lord in His last agony. The earliest known representation of the Crucifixion, except indeed an intentional caricature, is of the sixth century, so that for half a millennium at least the followers of Christ were content to leave to pagan hands the pictorial record of His sufferings. That which they had seen with their eyes, which they had looked upon, and their hands had handled, they never tired of declaring unto men ; and they declared it not by word of mouth only, but by the pencil also, in every form of tender remembrance of the dear face they had loved. So, upon their sacramental vessels they engraved the Likeness. So, when they lay down for their last sleep they placed it on their breast. So, when the darkness fell upon the bloody arena they would gather the torn fragments of His martyrs and carry them to some quiet resting-place in the catacombs where His face, painted upon the wall, might overshadow them. And later, when they could serve Him without fear, and build churches to His praise, in fresco and mosaic they still declared that which they had seen. And yet there lay beyond the reach of Art the unknown

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quantity which was from the beginning. The Manhood they could paint, but the Godhead, never! Amongst the early Christians the image of Christ was never used in religious ceremonial. He whom they adored was not God apart from Man, nor Man apart from God, but One—Christ. And this, Art could never give. So that when men wearied of the simplicity of a purely spiritual worship, and turned to the splendour of ritual for aid in their devotions, they demanded too much of Art. Art knew Christ only as the Son of Man, but the image they desired to place upon their altars must be the Son of God. What could the painter do? The very purpose of his work, and the spirit of reverence with which he would approach it, would impel him to give to it all the majesty of which he deemed it worthy. How should the Master be differentiated from the malefactors except by the awful serenity of voluntary endurance? How should the Divinity of the Crucified be manifested except by the conquest of material forces? And so, through the attempt to paint a creed instead of a fact, Art became untrue both to the Church and to the studio. For the Divinity of Christ when He lived amongst men was not visible. Had men seen it they could not have taken Him with wicked hands. Even His mother knew not that He was God. He hung upon the cross as did those who suffered with

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Him. And Art had to choose between representing Him thus, or—an untruth. In choosing the untruth Art became degraded and ready to help religion with the lie that it held in its right hand. But religion is not to be served by a lie any more than is Art; and in accepting the alliance it became degraded too. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! it is not thou only that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee. What, through the nineteen centuries, have we done with the Likeness of the Master? It is too late now to ask whether the beautiful untruths to which men kneel have grown out of what seemed to be innocent love and holy adoration. It may be so—for it was not an enemy that did Him this dishonour. And yet the ruthless caricature traced by the cruel hands that scourged Him gave not so deep a wound as that which He received in the house of His friends when the worship of Christ changed into the worship of the crucifix.

And the hurt of the wound is not to Him alone, but through Him it reaches even to ourselves. Our right to look upon the Master's face, like every other right that we inherit, has by the shame of its abuse left us at times almost at our wits' end to discern where the right ceases and the wrong begins. Think for a moment of the

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story of the Christ of Andernach. It was a stormy night, and a poor, sinful creature was wandering about the streets with her babe in her arms. She was hungry and cold, and no soul in Andernach would take her in. And when she came to the church where the great crucifix stands she saw no light in the little chapel; so she sat down outside, on a stone, at the foot of the cross, and prayed till she fell asleep. But she did not sleep long—for presently a bright light shone full in her face, and when she looked up she saw a pale man standing right before her. He was almost naked, and there was blood upon his hands and upon his side, and great tears were in his beautiful eyes, and his face was like the face of the Saviour on the cross. Not a single word did he say to her, but he looked at her compassionately and gave her a loaf of bread, and took the little babe in his arms and kissed it. Then the mother looked up at the great crucifix—but there was no image there, and she shrieked, and fell down as if she were dead. And no one would have believed her story if a woman who lived hard by had not heard the scream, and looking from the window had not seen the figure take the ladder from the wall and go up, and nail itself to the cross. Since that night, it is said, the figure has never moved again.

This is the legend of the Christ of Andernach.

EVIL DREAMS

Surely superstition and Art have become inextricably entangled. How shall we distinguish between their constituent elements.

As to the crucifix, it is but one of the rude images we see at almost every roadside on the Continent—terrible beyond expression in the grossness with which the subject is handled, yet in its rude way telling the Divine story with a certain degree of truth.

As to the legend, it is less difficult to separate the true from the false. The desolate mother, the beatific vision, these things exist not alone on the banks of the Rhine. The figure may no more come down, but the compassionate eyes that looked upon her shall so look upon others until time shall be no longer. So far the legend is true; then the lie begins. She who looking up saw no figure on the cross may have been blinded only by tears. She who from the window saw the strange sequel of the story must have been blinded by superstition.

But the legend and the crucifix together, are they not a type of Religion and Art in their relation to each other—the glory of the right use—the shame of the abuse? By virtue of its simple record of a truth in the bowed head, the outstretched arms, the pierced side, Art became the channel of the Divine consolation, lifting the soul from earth to heaven. By virtue also of its grossness, its record

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only of the lesser truth, its limiting of the Divine Nature to the human, it became the foundation of a lying fable that would drag the Redeemer down from heaven to earth, and there nail Him once more upon the cross.

Art, however, had claimed its inheritance—the Likeness of Christ—and had clung to it throughout the dark ages. After the death of Constantine, the apostasy of Julian, and the division of the Empire, a sleep followed that might have been taken for death—but that it was troubled with evil dreams. But even in its dreams Art remembered the Likeness, and neither subtlety nor force could take away its part in Christ. At last the awakening came. The two records—one long hidden away in the libraries of the monasteries—the other stereotyped on the walls of the basilicas—were declared to the people by Luther and Raphael, who were born in the same year. The Words of Christ gave us the Reformation in Religion, the Likeness of Christ gave us the Renaissance in Art.

THE AWAKENING

*The study of the Words of Christ
gave us the Reformation in Religion,
the study of the Likeness of Christ
gave us the Renascence in Art.*

“FULL of grace and truth,” S. John says, in describing the face of Christ. His words are *πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας*. Now *χάριτος* means kindness, and *ἀληθείας* means honesty. A kind and honest face—that is what S. John saw with his eyes. But S. John was speaking of the face of the living Christ, of which these early drawings give, as I have said, but a poor resemblance. How shall S. John’s words—full of grace and truth—ever be realised by the painter? Who shall place on canvas the smile that irradiated His face when He took the little children in His arms and blessed them—or the look that broke Peter’s heart—or the searching gaze from which the Scribes and Pharisees shrank abashed. To express adequately the exalted character and higher

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emotions of the spiritual life is the noblest achievement of Art. It needs the vision of a great painter, and the language of a great poet, to define the art of portraiture at its highest. Lord Tennyson once asked Mr. G. F. Watts to describe his ideal of what a true portrait painter should be—and Mr. Watts' reply is enshrined in the "Idylls of the King"—

“As when a painter, poring on a face
Divinely, through all hindrance, finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and colour of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best.”

In this sense we have no likeness of Christ. Such an achievement would have been far beyond the reach of Roman portrait painters in the time of our Lord. To delineate the features—the fine broad forehead, the arched eyebrows, the straight nose, the kind and yet serious mouth, the falling of the hair upon the shoulders, the parting of the beard—all this was well within their power. Beyond all this lay the soul, which to their Art was an unknown quantity—just as the Divinity is still an unknown quantity even to the greatest of the painters of to-day.

Thus, if we look for expression in pictures of the face of Christ, we look for it in vain in the earlier records of Christian Art. It came with

THE AWAKENING



FROM A PAINTING BY GIOTTO.

the Renaissance. "Full of grace and truth," says S. John—and the frescoes of the catacombs say the same thing. The solemn eyes never change; the lip never quivers with emotion, is never compressed with anger or rebuke. And during the long centuries—from the time when the Church came forth from its hiding-place in the catacombs

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FROM A PAINTING BY ORCAGNA.

to the days of the early painters of the Renaissance—the great mosaics of the basilicas have repeated the same story. In S. Paolo fuori le Mura, in SS. Cosma è Damiano, in the Baptistery of Constantine, in S. Prassede, in S. Pudenziana, it is always the same Christ, with the same grave and serene countenance, full of grace and truth.

THE AWAKENING



FROM A PAINTING BY FRA ANGELICO.

Then came the great change. The Likeness remained, but to the Likeness was added expression. With the dawn of the Reformation came also the dawn of the Renascence. The Studio and the Church were emancipated at the same time. A thousand years of copying had been enough for the one—as a thousand years of

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priest-rule had been enough for the other. And as the religious movement came from within the Church—so the art movement came from within the Studio. The first painters of the Awakening were the mosaic-workers whose lives were spent in decorating the churches with the Likeness of Christ. Margaritone, Cimabue, Giotto, Orcagna—were all trained in this great school. What an unfolding of the splendours of Paradise it must have been to these men when painting became the medium through which Christian emotion should be expressed. Even now, in climbing Giotto's tower we seem to get a little closer to Heaven, not defiantly, like the builders of Babel, but lovingly; seeing also the fields round Florence where as a lad Giotto had tended his sheep. And at Pisa, in the Campo Santo, when the sun streams down the long arcade, we see

“ Azure and scarlet, which still breathe
Orcagna's life—whilst overhead
The blue tides of a southern sky
Set round a minster front of snow.”

Giotto was born about the same year as Dante, and the two were friends. He was a disciple of Cimabue—to whom he was indebted for the first recognition of his genius. But he proved stronger than his master—for he broke away from the trammels of the Byzantine schools, by which

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FROM A PAINTING BY VAN EYCK.

Margaritone and Cimabue were still entangled. He lived to be a working contemporary of Orcagna, and the lives of these two painters covered a little more than a century—from 1266 to 1368. Then, after a dark but happily brief, night, in which the very existence of Art seemed threatened, came Fra Angelico. The name is but a sobriquet,

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for Giovanni da Fiesole—just as Orcagna is a sobriquet for Andrea di Cione, who was called Arcagnuolo, the Archangel. The name expresses very well the religious fervour with which he followed Art. It was the “blessed” Fra Angelico who refused to lay down his palette even in exchange for the archbishopric of Florence. And with Angelico—but far away in the North—Van Eyck shone like the moon seen after sunrise. I have given examples from the works of these four men. They mark the transition from the simple portraiture with which the Church had hitherto been content, to the imaginative renderings which were to follow. The frescoes and glass pictures of the catacombs had served their purpose in securing the Likeness. The mosaics of the basilicas had preserved it through the dark ages. And now the dawn of the Renascence of Art was breaking. The sun was indeed high in the heavens when Van Eyck invented oil painting, and painted his Rex Regum. The sacred tradition, however, sufficed. The King of Kings is grave, but not wrathful. Van Eyck, like Giotto and Orcagna, is content to follow the mosaics of the basilicas.

And so, when Rome and Florence and Pisa begin to speak the language of Art, they tell the same story. But they do not speak alone. It is being told also by every altarpiece in Christendom,

THE AWAKENING

as it had been told at first in every secret chamber of the catacombs. And as one Gospel contains the life of Christ and is yet supplemented by another—so the frescoes of the catacombs and the mosaics of the basilicas are supplemented by the pictures of the Renaissance. The first Christian painters never represented the sufferings of Christ. No man paints the portrait of his friend in the agony of death—it is the living face, that can give back love for love and smile for smile, that personal affection desires to recall. But when Van Eyck paints Christ as the King of Kings, and Angelico the lifting of His lifeless body from the cross—surely there will be a difference. From this time the painter is no more content to paint the Likeness of Christ apart from expression. The whole story of His life must now be told—not in the passionless simplicity of portraiture with which it had been told in the catacombs and the basilicas—but with the passion of the great revival of Art, and with the knowledge that makes the human face an open book to the artist.

THE RENASCENCE

With the Renascence of Art expression was added to the Likeness, but the Likeness remained the same.

OF the great painters of the Renascence there are five men to whom we must look as representatives of Italian Art at its highest. They are, naming them in the order of their birth—Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Titian, Raphael, and Correggio. From this quintet have come the finest interpretations of the face of Christ the world has ever seen. Let us consider them for a moment.

Amongst them all there is none whose name is held in higher reverence than that of the Florentine, Leonardo da Vinci. He was a pupil of Andrea Verrocchio, and it is said that the master, on seeing the young painter's work, abandoned painting, in despair of ever attaining an excellence that Leonardo seemed to reach at a stride.

THE RENASCENCE



FROM A DRAWING BY LEONARDO DA VINCI.

Da Vinci was essentially a learned painter ; skilled in the science of Art ; a poet ; a musician ; an architect ; an engineer ; a mathematician ; certainly a man of affairs ; perhaps even a statesman. He founded an Academy of Arts at Milan, where he drew round him many younger painters who in their turn became founders of schools. It was at

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Milan that Leonardo painted the greatest of his pictures—the “Last Supper”—and it is by this picture that he is most generally known. Unhappily this masterpiece has nearly perished. The refectory of the convent of Santa Maria has dealt less kindly with it even than the catacombs with the frescoes of the early Christians. The beautiful ideal over which Da Vinci pondered half his lifetime would indeed have been quite lost to us but for a finished study of it that he himself made. This study, reproduced on page 135, is preserved in the Accademia di Belle Arti.

Da Vinci remained at Milan for about seventeen years, returning to Florence in 1499. He died in 1519. But the face of Christ he never finished. He had attempted more than Art could accomplish; he had attempted to imagine a face that should take the place of the face that Christians had known for fifteen hundred years. And with what result? The likeness in it is after all the Likeness of Christ except in one particular. The brow is the same—the features are the same—the hair is the same—only there is no beard. Now here is a strange thing. The beard which Leonardo da Vinci did not accept from the traditions of his own craft is the one characteristic that can be established by evidence apart from Art altogether. The beard was sacred to the race of which Christ came; and the Evangelist, who

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knew Christ face to face, adopts the words of Isaiah as descriptive of the cruel scourging, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair."

There are very few works remaining by this great master. Dr. Richter enumerates no less than nineteen of which all trace is lost; and Sir Edward Poynter adds that those which can with any certainty be ascribed to him are only nine, including the "Last Supper." In the gallery of Prince Lichtenstein, however, there is a painting, very elaborate and highly wrought, said to be by Da Vinci, of Christ bearing the cross, in which the commonly received Likeness is frankly and vividly rendered. The picture has both the strength and the weakness of this great painter. The tenderness—the learned technicality—become almost affectations, and distress us, as we are distressed by the works of the Decadents. We feel that Da Vinci had not yet seen the direct vision—just as we feel that Guido Reni had lost it, and that Carlo Dolci had never even been conscious of its existence.

But when we turn to Michael Angelo it is a very different matter. Michael Angelo holds us as in the grasp of a giant. If we are distressed it is only for a moment, and it is with fear rather than with doubt: a fear, however, that never

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degenerates into weakness, but is rather transmuted into love. The head which I have chosen in this case is undoubtedly from the painter's noblest work—the great fresco that covers the wall of the Sistine Chapel.

In this picture, again, the verisimilitude is not preserved. Profoundly as Michael Angelo was moved by the passion of Christianity, yet the discovery of the lost statues of Greece filled him with yearnings after the splendours of the great Pagan schools. In laying out his plans for the transepts of S. Peter's, he remembers that Christ stretched out his arms upon the cross for us. But in carving a *pietà*, or in painting our Lord's second coming, his Christ must be a God, and his conception of a God he finds only in the antique. There is moreover another aspect of the question to be considered. The painter, looking back into the infinite past, or forward into the infinite future, sees Christ—but sees no marks of the passion, no pain, no sorrow, no infirmity of the flesh—but Christ related to us only through the taking upon Himself of our nature. Instead therefore of a likeness, the picture becomes a symbol :—as frankly a symbol as are the first two letters of his name XP, or the word ΙΧΘΥC—the sacred acrostic—or the figure of a lamb—or the legend AGNUS DEI. It is true the symbol chosen by Michael Angelo

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FROM A PAINTING BY MICHAEL ANGELO.

is greater than these, and more worthy of the Redeemer: that is only in accordance with the genius of the painter. Michael Angelo was not content to represent a letter of the Greek alphabet judging the world. But the figure which stands for Christ is not the less symbol because it is expressed in terms of the human form. It is not

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a likeness, but it shows by visible contrast how infinitely more exalted, as well as more tender, is the simplest rendering of a natural truth than any symbol the imagination even of the greatest genius can devise.

More exalted, more tender—not *as well as* more true—but *because* more true. For the three are not simply co-ordinates, they are resultants. It is well for us to realize from a consideration of this example, the work of one of the greatest painters the world has known, what Christian Art might have become if we had possessed no authentic, no authoritative record of the Likeness, but had rested upon the imaginings of lesser men. Michael Angelo was at least strong, but ten thousand tongues, chattering their feeble thoughts in rivalry with each other would have resulted in a confusion greater than that of Babel.

Michael Angelo, however, like Leonardo da Vinci, did not reject the Likeness. There are some very fine works of his in which he has rendered it, with extraordinary majesty and tenderness of expression. We have two of these in England. One is in the National Gallery, of which a reproduction is given on page 141. It is an unfinished painting, but strongly characteristic of the master. The other is in the British Museum, a delicate drawing in chalk on gray paper, full of mystery, and the passionate religious feeling mani-

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FROM A PAINTING BY MICHAEL ANGELO.

fested in his intercourse with Vittoria Colonna. The drawing was given to her by him ; perhaps they had studied the Likeness together.

In approaching such a subject as the picture of the "Dies Iræ," one must move with careful steps. Almost every writer seems to come with some preconception that gives a bias to his judgment.

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One critic describes Michael Angelo's Christ as "a thundering athlete—a nude, wrathful giant, without one touch of pity or mercy in Him," and contrasts it with the "Fair Shepherd" of the catacombs, the sweet, solemn mosaics of the basilicas, and the lovely sculptures of our Gothic churches. He condemns it as partly the cause and partly the effect of the cruel, dark views of Christianity prevailing in the sixteenth century. "What a chasm," he says. "What a chasm separates the Christ of the Sistine Chapel from the Fair Shepherd of the catacombs!" Yes; but then what a chasm separates also heaven and hell!

It is the common failing of amateur criticism to look for qualities in a work of Art that are incompatible with the artist's primary intention. Thus, one complains that the eyes are stern—forgetting that they are the eyes of Christ when He was rebuking the Pharisees. Another objects that they are too tender—forgetting that they are the eyes of Christ comforting the women who wept as He fell beneath the cross. When Angelo represents the infant Saviour, caressed by Joseph and Mary, he represents Him as a child. When he paints Christ as Creator, he gives Him divine strength and knowledge and benignity. When the dead Christ lies once more on His mother's knee, he shows the pity of it. When Christ rises to judge the world, Michael Angelo represents Him as the

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Avenger. Did the beloved disciple darken the imagination of Christendom? and yet he writes: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." That is what Michael Angelo has painted.

But whether Dean Farrar's criticism of Michael Angelo's great picture is just or not, his description of it is magnificent. "This nude, wrathful giant," he says, "looks down upon the damned, whom he is hurling into darkness as a crushed, agonised, demon-tortured rainstorm of ruined humanity, with inexorable rejection. His muscular right arm is uplifted as though at once to drive away and smite. He is just rising from his seat, and in the next moment will stand terrifically upright. The Virgin shrinks terrified under the protection of His arm."

Is there a cryptogram underlying all great Art, that different men read such different meanings in the same line, the same brush-mark, the same presentment of vision? To me it seems that the Mother, so far from shrinking from Him in terror, turns to find shelter in His wounded side. She remains a woman still, but her son is a God. The picture which the Dean places in comparison with this is the "Dies Domini" of Sir Edward Burne-Jones. I believe however that both pictures are right. The attitude is singularly the same in each.

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The right arm is uplifted. In the "Dies Iræ" it is uplifted to strike. "*Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*" In the "Dies Domini" it is raised to show the pierced side. "*Come unto Me.*" But it is the same Christ. Surely, as our Lord moved amongst men, His features remained the same. Surely, under different circumstances, the expression of His countenance changed. That is what Art says in the works of the painters of the Renaissance. Does the Church teach differently? Does the Church say there is no wrath, no terror, in the "Dies Iræ"?

But there is peril to the critic who attempts to interpret the work of a great painter through his character, or to interpret his character through his works. Art is a force that bends men to its purpose despite their character. At the very time when Michael Angelo was painting this picture of the terrors of the Last Judgment, he wrote to Vittoria Colonna, the woman he loved: "I am going in search of truth with uncertain step. My heart, always wavering between vice and virtue, suffers and faints, like a weary traveller wandering in the dark." There is no fierceness in this. Nor, indeed, when the great painter turns from the mood of self-inspection to the controversies of the studios, does he appear to be the "terrible fellow" the critics love to paint him. He contends for the supremacy of Italian Art. But that is

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natural in a painter born in Arezzo, educated in Florence, living and working in Rome. Flemish Art, he thinks, is more devout than that of Italy. "Italian painting," he says, "will never bring a tear to the eye, while Flemish will make many a tear to flow. Flemish Art will always seem beautiful to women, priests, and nuns,—and even to noble spirits, if they are deaf to true harmony. But it is only works executed in Italy that are really true Art." And he adds that "Good painting is in itself religious and noble. It is a reaching after His perfection, the shading of His pencil, and unites us to God."

From Michael Angelo we turn to Titian. Unhappily, the relations between Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci were strained. Michael Angelo drove Da Vinci from Florence; but Titian was his friend. They were nearly of the same age, and met each other in Venice and Florence and Rome, each the accredited master of a great school. Titian is a man strongly built, full of life and movement; the proportions of his face are perfect, the forehead high, the brow bold and projecting, the features finely chiselled. There is a marked likeness between Titian and Angelo, even to the lines of their beards, worn a little short and pointed, and the fineness of their hands. But how different are their temperaments! How different their Art!

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Angelo is "of imagination all compact." Titian is altogether controlled by the sense of beauty—and of beauty, especially the beauty of colour. And now these two men, both masters of their craft, each from a different point of view, approach the subject of the Likeness of Christ. The head I have chosen to represent Titian is from the famous picture at Dresden of "The Tribute Money." Christ is standing between the two disputants, who think to disarm him with a little flattery. "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God, neither carest thou for any man. Tell us, therefore: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?" One is showing Him the coin, not yet realising the significance of the question, "Whose is this image and superscription?" There is no great manifestation of passion or emotion in this. It is the strong presentment of a living man; it is the splendour of colour; it is the mastery of technique; in a word, it is the work of Titian. But it is also the face of Christ—not agonising in the garden, not dying upon the cross, not transfigured with blissful emotion; but calm and thoughtful, the Jewish type well observed, the Likeness vividly realised. It cannot be described better than in the words of S. John—an honest and kind face.

Titian, however, is by no means limited to the expression of beauty without passion. His range

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FROM A PAINTING BY TITIAN.

is through all the regions of intellectual, sensual, or emotional Art. How this subject of the Likeness of Christ held his imagination may be seen in the few pathetic words with which his life closed. "Dear to me," he says, "dear to me are the mountains of Cadore and the rushing waters of the Piave, and the murmur of the wind in the

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pine trees, where my home lies far away. But not there! In the city where I have laboured—in the church where I achieved my first triumph—bury me there! Promise to bury me there, and I will yet live to paint for you another ‘Christ,’ a ‘Christ of Pity,’ that shall be more near to what He is than any that has yet been painted, even as I am by so many years the nearer to seeing Him myself.” Titian was an old man then, bent with the age of ninety-nine years—the plague struck him down—and the *pietà* was never finished.

And then, from a little town in the East, between the Apennines and the Adriatic, comes Raphael d'Urbino. Raphael was, as so many great painters have been, himself the son of a painter. Nothing that Art could yield in the way of teaching was withheld from him. Michael Angelo and Da Vinci and Masaccio were his inspiration in Florence and Rome. He had learned all that could be taught of perspective, of the technique of Art, of the science of Art. Artists were employed for him to make sketches in Southern Italy and Greece. And now he too must paint this face of Christ. Again we are able to turn to the greatest work of a great master. The picture of the Transfiguration is his masterpiece. The figure of our Lord is sublime. And the face! It expresses the rapture of actual com-

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FROM A PAINTING BY RAPHAEL.

munion with God. The hair is lifted by a breath that comes from Paradise. The eyes, large and full, look up without fear, without regret. There is no cloud between Him and the Father ; there is no exultation ; there is no pain. Raphael has realised the words of S. John more nearly than they have ever been realised before.

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Da Vinci and Raphael died in the year 1520—the one a veteran of seventy-five, the other scarcely having reached the full strength of manhood. And now we come to the youngster of the group, Correggio. Titian and Michael Angelo were still living, both of them men of between thirty and forty, when Correggio was a lad of nineteen. There is nothing more interesting in Art than to observe the relation between the elder and younger men. Naturally the young learn from the old, but the old learn also from the young if they are true artists. Correggio has left his mark upon Art, which can never be effaced; but he was not a follower of any School. He never studied the antique, yet he is the apostle of the grace of form. He never troubled to visit Rome, yet Giulio Romano, a Roman born and bred—the favourite disciple of Raphael—declared that the paintings of Correggio were the finest he had ever seen. There are no smart touches in his handling; his technique is tender and sweet. Women and children and angels, nymphs and goddesses, are his theme. The “Gypsy” Madonna of Naples is the portrait of his wife. The “Assumption” in the dome of the cathedral of Parma is a floating glory of fair forms. But the face that every Christian painter is painting, draws him by its fascination, and he too must paint Christ. He paints “The Agony in the Garden,” and the “Ecce Homo,”

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FROM A PAINTING BY CORREGGIO.

and of these I have taken the latter from our own National Gallery. As Da Vinci shows us the Comforter, as Angelo shows us the Avenger, as Raphael shows us the Son communing with the Father, as Titian shows us the Man Christ Jesus reasoning with His opponents, so Correggio shows us the Christ "made flesh" and suffering.

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Did these painters of the Renaissance more than
other men love Christ ? did they understand Him
better ? that they painted Him so divinely :

“ Flower o’ the peach,
Death for us all, and his own life for each.”

That is the refrain of Fra Lippo Lippi’s song, as
he escapes from the cloister of the Carmelites for
a night’s revel in the streets of Florence.

“ What would one have ?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem
Meted on each side by the angel’s reed
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo, and me
To cover.”

That is the highest aspiration of Andrea del
Sarto—in which Christ finds no place. But listen
once more to Robert Browning :

“ The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colours, light and shades,
Changes, surprises—Art was made for that ;
God uses us to help each other so——”

—so that even if these men did not fully under-
stand Christ, Christ understood them, and perhaps
loved them too.

But love takes many forms, and we cannot see
into each other’s hearts. How Luini must have
dreamed over his young Christ. The face is

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FROM A PAINTING BY LUINI.

animated with sweet reasonableness. The Likeness is finely preserved, even though there is no beard, for it is the face of a youth. It is the lad with kind and true eyes—with whom S. John had played when they were children together. I count it one of the most beautiful visions left to us by the painters of the Renaissance.

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And Lucas Cranach, the friend of Luther, and himself a sturdy reformer, must have dreamed—and loved too. The thorn-crowned head shows only the anguish of the Redeemer—scourged, mocked, forsaken; but the picture contains a singularly tender and beautiful episode. Around the head of our Lord are a company of chérub angels, leaning forward their young faces to kiss Him.

There were, of course, many other great painters of the Renaissance who not only exalted Art, but poured out the passion of their lives upon this subject. In Venice there were the Bellini, the immediate forerunners of Titian. The painting from which the head on page 156 is taken is in the Royal Gallery at Berlin. It represents our Lord as the Great Teacher, His right hand pointing to heaven, the book in His left. But it is little more than a transcript of the mosaic in SS. Cosma è Damiano, where our Lord stands in the same attitude, holding in His left hand a scroll instead of a book. The faces are wonderfully alike, and there was no occasion for the expression of passion or emotion in the action of the benign Lawgiver.

Then there was Ghirlandaio, the master of Angelo, the favourite of Florence and Rome and Pisa and Siena—a little dry, perhaps, and stiff in manner, but resourceful in invention; there was

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FROM A PAINTING BY LUCAS CRANACH.

Botticelli, the master of Lippo Lippi the younger, as he was the disciple of Lippi the elder—Fra Lippi—the scapegrace of convent life, who, again, was the pupil of Masaccio; there was Andrea del Sarto—the rival of Raphael—with capacity for the highest achievements, but weighted down with the chains of a dissolute life. There were Cimabue,

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FROM A PAINTING BY BELLINI.

Giotto, Orcagna, Cima, Mantegna, Verrocchio, Perugino, Tintoretto, Veronese, Giulio Romano. The works of these men cover the whole period of the transition from twilight to dawn, from dawn to midday, of Italian Art.

But the Renaissance of Art was not in Italy alone. In Spain Morales so touched the hearts

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FROM A PAINTING BY QUENTYN MATSYS.

of the people with his *pietàs* that he was called *el tivino*. In Flanders Memling was making beauty for the shrines of beautiful churches. In Germany Dürer was illustrating the life of Christ through the new evangel of the press. In England, Holbein, sent over from Basle by his friend Erasmus, became the guest of Sir Thomas More, and

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FROM A PAINTING BY VANDYCK.

painted many of his finest works for the king. The head by Quentyn Matsys is from a painting in the National Gallery. Comparing it with the Bellini we perceive how the two men—so differently environed—were dominated by the same tradition. And if we turn to page 31 the secret is revealed: the Flemish painter, not less than

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FROM A PAINTING BY REMBRANDT.

the Venetian, has taken his ideal of Christ direct from the mosaics of the basilicas. There is a quaint legend that the rose of Palestine flowers only in the Holy Land, and on the night when Christ was born; but the rose of our garden unfolds its blossoms wheresoever there is a painter in Christendom.

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FROM A PAINTING BY GUIDO RENI.

These men all painted Christ, whether they knew Him or not, whether they followed Him or not. Their paintings are the corolla of my flower, as the mosaics of the basilicas and the relics of the catacombs are the stamen and the calyx. But the petals withered in the Decadence, and though they retain something of the colour and perfume of the

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FROM A PAINTING BY VELASQUEZ.

rose, they are scattered leaves rather than the rose itself. In the four heads which I have selected to represent the Likeness of Christ as rendered by the painters of the Decadence, there is still much to remind one of the great magicians. Guido Reni amongst the Italians, Velasquez of Spain, Vandyck and Rembrandt of the Low Countries are

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not unworthy of the traditions they inherited. The "Ecce Homo" of Guido is from the famous picture in Dresden—one of many painted by the artist, in his dexterous and accomplished manner. It is, perhaps, more human and less divine—if we know what it is to be divine—than the conceptions of the earlier schools. The "Crucifixion," by Velasquez, is the expression of the agony of death, by the most realistic of painters. How many times had Velasquez seen such suffering as that in the living—the dying—faces of the martyrs in the city of Madrid, where the picture now hangs? The Rembrandt is from a picture in the National Gallery of Christ blessing little children. The magnificent head by Vandyck is from his painting in Buckingham Palace, of Christ healing the sick. There is little sentiment in it, but there is fine painting—and its frank realism almost disarms the critic. But when the petals have fallen from a rose they never grow again.

CHRIST IN MODERN ART

The Likeness of Christ is the one thing in which all Christian Churches and all Schools of Art are agreed.

OF the Likeness of Christ in Modern Art the story is quickly told. It does not change—any more than it has changed during the darkness of the catacombs, or the twilight of the middle ages, or the blaze of meridian splendour which made the Renaissance of Art the glory of the sixteenth century. Creeds have differed; Churches have separated; Nations have struggled for the mastery in religion, and for their particular interpretation of the teaching of Christ; but they have all alike accepted Him as represented in Art. If Art was the battle-ground of the early Church, it is now the only common ground on which there is no strife. There is no difference between the Likeness as adopted in Italy, or France, or Germany, or Spain, or England; there is no difference

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between the Latin, the Greek, and the Anglican communions; there is no difference between the Old World and the New. High, and Low, and Broad—Churchman and Nonconformist—Protestant and Catholic—are agreed in this. As the petals of the flower are one and live by the same sap, so the Likeness is one and is inspired by the same original.

This fidelity to a type does not by any means detract, however, from the originality of conception with which the modern painter can deal with his theme. To have a theme is not a restraint to genius but an incentive. It is only the false that cannot conform to facts. The portrait painter never claims to have invented his subject. The problem he has to solve is to put before us, not something new and strange, but something we shall recognise. There may be portraits which are not likenesses, as we see too often in the works of inferior artists. There may be likenesses which are not portraits, as we see when two men resemble each other in countenance. But in the discernment of the soul, as well as the body, there is scope enough for the highest faculties of the greatest genius, and it is in this direction that the highest triumphs of Art have been achieved. Thus, in taking for his theme the historic Likeness of Christ, the painter has inherited all the splendour of the past and all the

CHRIST IN MODERN ART



FROM A PAINTING BY FRITZ VON UHDE.

promise of the future. He holds in his hand treasures, the use of which can be limited only by his capacity to reflect the Divine mind.

How are these treasures being used to-day? The three examples by Holman Hunt, Bonnat, and Von Uhde are from England, France, and Germany. They serve to show the retention of

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the Likeness. But that is an incident only in the movement that is taking place in Modern Art—a necessary incident, however—for, without the retention of the Likeness, the special meaning of the new school would be unintelligible. I refer, of course, to the painting of the figure of Christ in the midst of scenes and accessories of the present moment. Thus Beraud's picture, which excited so much attention in the Salon recently, represents a dining-room in Paris. At the table, furnished with all the luxuries of Parisian life, a company of gentlemen are seated. Amongst them is one who bears the Likeness, and at his feet lies a woman—not an outcast from the street, Society would not permit that—but a lady, dressed in Parisian costume, *chic*, and beautiful with the beauty that comes with the white splendours of fine muslin. We do not see her face. The chief point of the painting lies in the variety of expression of the faces of the men. The picture is called, "Christ in the House of Simon the Pharisee." Another picture by the same painter represents the Via Crucis. Christ has fallen beneath the weight of the cross, and is taunted by the rabble multitude. The people are not the Jewish people, or Orientals such as might have been there; they are our own people—the street ruffian, the scum of the slums of Paris or London—yes, and the respectable people too, who would join in hunting down one

CHRIST IN MODERN ART



FROM A PAINTING BY LEON BONNAT.

whose teaching interfered with their business. The picture is indeed a sharp satire on the Christianity of the nineteenth century.

Then in Germany also this association of the Likeness of Christ with the common events of life has become a theme of Modern Art. A beautiful example of this is to be found in Von Uhde's

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painting of "The Journey to Emmaus." We see a lane outside a Dutch village; the light lies low on the horizon; the trees are dark against the sky, for it is evening; two men are trudging homewards along the lane, when they are joined by a third—Christ. It is the old story freshly told, and seems to make Palestine lie very close to our doors.

After all, however, the new movement is not so very new. It is just what Rembrandt did when he painted Christ amidst Dutch Boers. It is what the Church required when it asked for altarpieces in which Christ and His Mother should appear, surrounded by ecclesiastics. Or is Christ only for ecclesiastics and not for laymen? In a quaint old painting in the Museum at Nuremberg, representing the Nativity of our Lord, the blessed Mother is sitting up in bed, on an orthodox spring mattress and bedstead of strictly German make. The Child is attended by some old gossips, one of whom is bringing in refreshment, apparently of the nature of a caudle, suitable for the invalid. The utensils are painted even more carefully than the dinner service in Beraud's picture. There is nothing new under the sun.

I am not sure that there is nothing new under the sun; for after nineteen centuries, during which this subject of Christ—His birth, His childhood, His teaching, His suffering, His death, His resur-

CHRIST IN MODERN ART



FROM A PAINTING BY HOLMAN HUNT.

rection, His ascension, His coming again—has been repeated by countless thousands of artists, a picture has been painted with an absolutely new idea—an idea so divinely beautiful that one is amazed that it has not been anticipated—so fresh that it carries us back to the old days when men painted that which they had seen with their eyes.

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“Christ upon the Tree of Life,” designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones is a gift from the New World to the Old. It has been executed in mosaic on the triumphal arch of the American Church in Rome, and so takes its place with the imperishable records of the past. It represents our Lord with outstretched arms, not upon a cross, but upon the Tree of Life, which bears its fruit for the healing of the nations. Upon His hands and His side are no marks of the passion, for the sacrifice did not begin on Calvary—it began with His life upon earth. On His right is Adam, or man, with folded hands, adoring. Beyond this figure are the fields he shall till, and the sheaves of corn which shall crown his labour. On the other side is a group of exquisite beauty. Eve, the mother of the race He came to redeem, with two children ; one, Abel, a baby on her breast ; the other, Cain, a boy of three or four, clinging to the skirt of her garment. Beyond her is a garden of flowers, in the midst of which is a lily, the type of the Madonna. And over all are the arms, beneath which they shall find shelter. In the wide range of Art I know nothing more lovely, more human, more Divine, than this.

And yet, in this great picture, which I believe to be one of the greatest works of the age, there is no likeness. It is the one exception in Modern Art, as the Christ of the “Dies Iræ” by Michael

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Angelo is the one exception of the Renascence. But in each the justification is the same. They do not pretend to represent Christ as men knew Him on Earth. They are attempts to represent the unknown by symbol. The one takes account of the Past, the other looks forward to the Future. Against both of them Theology may have something to say—and Art may have no defence. What was the Word—who, in the counsels of the Eternal Father, before being made flesh, determined the redemption of our race? What will the Judge be like at the Great Assize? That can be defined no more by the Theologian than by the Artist. In Art at least it can only be expressed by symbol. And the symbol chosen by these great artists for the Son of God, who was also the Son of Man, is the figure and form common to the sons of men.

I have reserved for my last illustration of the Likeness of Christ one that is perhaps the best known and most loved of them all. I suppose that there is scarcely a home in England which does not possess it in some form, as an etching, or an engraving. It is reproduced here by a process of photogravure direct from a painting by Mr. Holman Hunt. "The Light of the World" is not to be passed over simply as a popular picture. It is much more than that. It is popular as a divine melody from Handel's "Messiah" is

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popular—or a great hymn of the Church—which expresses in a higher form of language than that of common life the passion of religious emotion. It does this, not by sinking to a lower level, but by raising us to a higher. Is the Christ in this picture the Man of Sorrows? There is sorrow in His face. Is it Christ the Great Teacher? It brings to our minds words not only of consolation, but of warning. Is it Christ the Judge? But with the authority and strength we see tenderness and compassion. It is the Christ Rex Regum who stands at our door and knocks.

Happily for the men who are now painting Christ, the days are past when Art could corrupt Theology—or Theology could emasculate Art. The Church and the Studio understand each other better—the independence of their witness—the limitations of their authority. In dealing with the Likeness they have a common motive, and a common rule of action. The motive is the love of Christ—the controlling law is Truth.

DECEIVED OR DECEIVER

A retrospect and a dilemma.

BEFORE I lay down my pen I would refer to a fine passage by one who differs altogether from my views on this subject. Dr. Farrar says that "Art cannot deceive. It is an unerring self-revelation of the character both of nations and of individuals. The Art of every age and country infallibly reflects the tone, the temper, the religious attitude of which it is the expression." If this be true—and I, of course, cannot but accept it, for it is the whole thesis of my book, "The Witness of Art"—if this be true, then everything that I have said here is vindicated. The relics of the catacombs infallibly reflect the tone, the temper; the religious attitude of the early Christians, from the days of the Apostles. They made the dark chambers beautiful as with the visible presence of the Master. His face overshadowed the graves of His martyrs. His likeness hung round the

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necks of women who died trusting in Him. His acts of love and mercy were pictured on the dreadful walls. Since then the Church of Christ has been the guardian and keeper of the Likeness of Christ.

We are told to-day that this Likeness is a delusion. If so—has the Church been the deceiver—or has it been deceived? Looking back on what I have written I perceive that it is not the year only that is growing old—the centuries, the millenniums, are growing old too. It is not only that the time of roses is past—we are invited to throw away the one rose that remains to us, because it seems a little touched by the frost. And yet—as the children still love to decorate the house—so our artists are still striving to make the world more beautiful. Amongst their highest conceptions of beauty I find this Likeness. They have followed it for nearly two thousand years. Is it a phantasm—a will-o'-the-wisp? Before we can believe it to be so we must be convinced that two special miracles have been wrought—the first to conceal the true Likeness, in order that it might never be degraded to superstitious uses; the second, for the purpose of misleading the Universal Church into accepting the false. In reply to the first hypothesis, it is sufficient to point out that if a miracle has been wrought for such a purpose it has been ineffectual. The second

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hypothesis is even more untenable. It violates our faith in the Divine Being as the Author of verity.

This is a question that cannot be properly dealt with through the ordinary weapons of humour or satire. It is impossible, however, to be unmoved by a grim sense of incongruity in the supposition that it could be in accordance with the will of Christ, that throughout the Christian Dispensation a false image should have been held steadily before the eyes of His people; misleading them in all their thoughts of Him; showing them always another—not Himself—doing the things He did, blessing the children, comforting the women, teaching the men, suffering for us all; or that He could, and did, control the record of the writer, but that He could not, or did not, control the record of the painter. There was indeed amongst the old gods one who had two faces. He represented the rising and the setting sun. He held the keys of heaven and hell. Through him alone it was believed that our prayers could reach Olympus. But the temple of Janus was shut by Augustus in the very year when Christ was born. I know not whether it is right or safe to regard one attribute of the Divine Being as of more account than another. If the sense of His love comes very closely home to our hearts, the confidence in His sincerity comes equally home to our

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intelligence. Christ has shown to us not only His hands and His feet, but His face. Where then—and when—was the knowledge of the face of Christ lost—if it is lost? Not in the grave—for He saw no corruption. Not in the Resurrection—for He was recognised by the brethren. Not in the Ascension—for we have the promise of His coming again in like form. The disciples believed not for joy—Why do we disbelieve?

Now see! If the petals of our rose had been only artificial, not all the gold of Arabia or the wisdom of the wise men could so have put them together that they should grow as a living flower. But if they are real, even though they may be torn asunder and scattered, their colour remains and their fragrance clings to them still.

And it is so with the likenesses we have been considering. They are but scattered petals; nevertheless they come from a living stem, and Art reverences them, being true, for their truth's sake.

FOR EVER

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EASTER IN THE STUDIO

The Painter's tribute to Christ.

THE Church of Christ, then, has neither been a deceiver, nor has it been deceived. It still holds in its keeping the Likeness of Christ. The question, however, is no longer as to the scattered petals of a rose; it is a question as to the sun itself; it is the question whether the sun is still in the heavens. The years grow old; centuries, millenniums pass, and the old gods pass with them, not to return. But Easter returns—and what Baldur was to the forefathers of our race; what Osiris was to the Egyptian; what Adonis was to the Greek, that—at least—Christ is to the Christian.

And thus Easter has become not only the chief festival of Christendom, marking the rising of our Sun-God, but also the central theme of Christian

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Art—the theme fullest of inspiration to the artist. There appears, indeed, to be nothing in heaven, or earth, or hell, that does not yield tribute to the painter, or that he does not attempt in some form to place upon his canvas; so that the words, “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force,” acquire in the studio a new and strange meaning, a meaning quite unknown to the theologian. But still, Easter is the centre of light to which all eyes turn who seek the expression of the passion of human life exalted to the Divine, or the Divine life made manifest for a moment through its contact with humanity. There is Whitsuntide; but the painter who tries to represent the Pentecostal flame will either know not what to say, or will soon find himself speaking in an unknown tongue. There is Trinity; but even the imagination of Michael Angelo quailed before that subject, and in his famous fresco in the Sistine Chapel, of the creation of Adam, he ventures upon no real representation of the Triune God. There is Advent, the theme of poets from the time when a contemporary of our first parents wrote, “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints.” And this, Michael Angelo—after thinking it over for nearly half a century—did essay to paint, and his painting of it is the eighth wonder of the world. But how many are there amongst men born of women who could

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enter upon such a trial of strength as that, and even so much as hope to come off victorious? And last of all there is Christmas, with all its happy associations and bright visions—the “starled wizards on the eastern road,” the “meek-eyed Peace crowned with olive green.” No picture ever has been painted—no, nor shall be—more beautiful than that described by Milton, in his “Hymn On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity”—

“ But see, the Virgin blest
Hath laid her babe to rest,

* * *

“ Heaven’s youngest teemèd star
Hath fix’d her polish’d car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending :
And all about the courtly stable
Bright harness’d angels sit, in order serviceable.”

I say no more beautiful picture could be painted, and that is true : but beauty is of many orders ; and, as Christmas passes into the Epiphany, and the Epiphany into Lent, the painter finds that there are greater subjects for his pencil than angel, or woman, or child—that in the life, and passion, and death of Christ are to be found the strongest, the fullest, the most divine, inspiration that Art can receive from Religion.

For by the word “Easter” I do not mean the Paschal feast alone, but the whole group of events

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clustering round the "three days." Passion week is but a minor chord in the prelude to the great Easter anthem, which ends with the Ascension. In Art we have to take the shade with the light—indeed, without shadow we can have no light. Good Friday and Easter Day together are like one of Rembrandt's etchings the blackness of Erebus, pierced by a shaft from Heaven. It is by virtue of this that Easter arrests and holds the imagination of the artist. For between the extreme light and the extreme dark there is room for every degree of shade and tender colour. It is as though the whole *dramatis personæ* of the Divine tragedy moved upon the stage at once. The Mother is there, as she was at Christmas. But she is a little aged now, and has learned the meaning of the strange words, that a sword should pierce through her own soul also. The angels are there—not singing the babe to rest, but strengthening the man for suffering. The twelve are there—let the painter think for a moment of those twelve faces, and differentiate them from each other in his mind—the beloved disciple, the impetuous Peter, the "one which was a devil." The Magdalen is there—the priests, the thieves, the soldiers, the people.

But the great Easter figure, no doubt, is that of Christ. How shall that be painted? How is it that when we speak of Christ the same form arises

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before the minds of us all, as if we knew Him, or, at least, had seen Him in our dreams? How is it that if one should draw for us a face, we should be able to say whether we recognised it as that of the Master?

That the fact is so is beyond dispute. The face of Christ is known in our midst. And we have done strange things with it. In France, for instance, it was removed from the high altar of Nôtre Dame, and its place taken by the beautiful Madame Maillard, as the personification of the Deity. In England, with a different sense of propriety, we wrenched it down from the west front of one of the loveliest of our cathedrals, and put up in its stead a bust of George the Third. But these things are not to be laid to the charge of Art. It is not Art—but rather the negation of Art—that blasphemes. Let us turn from the iconoclast to the artist.

Think then of any of the great Easter pictures with which the mind is stored. They may be by men of different nationalities, men endued with widely different traditions of Art. The "Ecce Homo" in our National Gallery is a head only; but, apart from all consideration of style, or quality, or merit, or demerit in the work itself, nobody who has lived in Christendom looking upon that picture, could question for whom it was intended. Criticise it as much as you like, object to its tenderness, say that the mouth is weak, the hair

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effeminate; that only makes the thing the more curious—because if you look into your own mind you will see that unconsciously you attribute all its faults to the painter, while the type, in its strength and nobility, remains as *the* Likeness which you recognise as that which the painter ought to have realised more perfectly. Or think of two other well-known paintings—one, the supreme moment of Christ's earthly triumph, His entry into Jerusalem amidst the plaudits of the multitude—the other, the lifting of His lifeless body from the cross, with torn hands and pierced side. There could be no greater contrast than these two subjects, and yet there is again no doubt as to the Likeness of the man in each. Nor would it be conceivable to us that the painter should have given Christ's face another form, or have used that Likeness for a different person.

Observe also the contrast between the two artists. The painter of the "Descent from the Cross," which hangs in the cathedral of Antwerp, was Rubens,—a German, trained in the Flemish school, but visiting Venice and Rome, and coming in his early life under the immediate influence of Titian. The painter of the "Entry into Jerusalem,"—which is one of the famous mural decorations in the church of St. Germain des Prés—was Hippolyte Flandrin, a Frenchman, trained in what M. Taine calls "the great pagan school" of France.

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When Rubens painted in Antwerp, the cries of the martyrs of the Reformation were still ringing through the century. He may have made studies for the faces of lost souls in purgatory from the faces he had himself seen wreathed in flames. When Flandrin painted in St. Germain des Prés, hearing the traffic of the streets of Paris, which in a cathedral sounds like distant thunder, he might have mistaken it for the rolling of the guillotine or the rattle of musketry of a revolution. In either case it was a time when the painter might well pause and wonder how long there would be any altarpieces to paint, or churches to decorate. But the sun may go down in blood—or hidden by clouds may seem to have no setting—and yet next morning it will arise fair and bright in the heavens. And so the great Easter festival comes round, and the Church calls to her sons, and Rubens answers with his "Descent from the Cross," and Flandrin answers with his "Entry of Christ into Jerusalem."

And we have seen that their answer is the same, so far as it touches the Likeness of the chief figure. And if instead of these two men we had taken painters of all schools, and of all ages, and of all countries, still the answer would have been the same. Cimabue, Giotto, and Fra Angelico, Raphael, Titian, Tintoretto, Correggio, Da Vinci, Veronese, Dürer, Holbein, Memling, Murillo, and

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the rest, have but one conception of Christ's face. Varying as they do in their infinite changes of style, and force, and choice of subject, and method of handling, yet they all observe the same type—because they all take it from a tradition that they received, but did not invent, and that they accept as higher and truer than anything they could themselves create.

But these great painters of the Renaissance succeeded to a time when there were no great painters—when Art was dead, and had been dead for a thousand years—and for the matter of that, buried too, with the beautiful statues of ancient Greece. There were, indeed, workers in mosaic, and metal, and glass, who made ornaments for the churches; but these men wrought on narrow lines of thought, and knew nothing of the imagination of a Fra Angelico, a Titian, or a Raphael. Here, then, is a strange thing. Art is re-born—the classic statues are discovered, imagination is set free to revel in every conceivable form of beauty and splendour and passion of life. And yet the greatest painters of the world take up this old tradition of the mosaic and metal workers of the dark ages, and cannot invent for themselves anything more divine, more worthy to represent the face of Him who is to be for ever the Sun of their Easter.

This general consensus of the great painters in their treatment of the Likeness of Christ is all the

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more remarkable from the fact that there is no parallel to it in their treatment of other characters included in the sacred narrative. Of S. Paul, indeed, and S. Peter, and S. John, there are, as we have seen, portraits of which the authenticity can scarcely be questioned; but they are very slight. For the Mother of Christ there is not so much as this. There is not only no likeness, there is not even a recognised type. Raphael, who was so careful to follow the earliest records of the likenesses of the Apostles, found no such inspiration for his drawings of the Blessed Virgin. The most beautiful of his Madonnas, the "Madonna di San Sisto," now in the Dresden gallery, is said to have been painted as the portrait of a lady who died in child-birth. It is from that picture of mother and child, perhaps the loveliest picture in the world, that Raphael was named "the divine." But Raphael's Madonnas are always Italian ladies; and in like manner the artists of France and Spain, and Germany found their highest inspiration of feminine beauty in the faces of their own countrywomen. Their paintings claim to be no more than the artist's conception of what the "Mater Dolorosa" might have been.

But there is another thought that arises in the mind in thinking of these Easter pictures, viz., the influence upon Art of the learning that comes, first, from the study of Art itself; and second,

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from the accumulated results of modern research. Looking at the work of Rubens, we may say that the art of painting, as an art, could no further go. The consummate mastery of effect—in composition, in line, in light and shade—astonishes and delights. See how these figures are grouped, so that every incident, whether of the most violent strain of action, as in the case of the young man bearing the chief weight of the body, or the pathetic lifting up of the hands of the mother to her dead son, or the drooping of the lifeless limbs of the Saviour of the world, shall each contribute, not only to tell the story, but to emphasize the line of beauty, and give a sense of strength and repose to the picture. Observe how the light is flashed upon the pallid side—not the side where the wound is, that would be too terrible—and then on the still whiter linen, so that the painter shall have scope to render the death pallor with the more realistic fidelity. That is art—consummate art—from the painter's point of view. For the rest, it does not matter to Rubens that the real cross was not the shape he has drawn it—that the Maries were not Dutchwomen, and did not dress in the garments of his daughters. The learning of the school of Rubens comes, not from the world *outside* the studio, but from handling the brush *in* the studio. But the learning displayed by the more modern school is of a different kind.

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The painter now must paint the real scene—the real city, the very breed of ass on which Christ rode, the very palms the people carried, the very garments they strewed in the way. How far this modern requirement strengthens or weakens Art is a great and difficult question. It strengthens it by adding to its resources, but it weakens it by expending part of its resources in a new direction. There is a degree of historical and topographical knowledge that is no doubt essential to the grave representation of religious subjects, and some will hold that Rubens attained it. At any rate his knowledge of these things carried him considerably further than some of the old German painters, who, conscious of their power of painting pots and pans, painted pots and pans as though pots and pans were the first and last aim of Art. From such an ultima ratio in Art we turn with thankfulness to the reverential observance of the unities of time and place. But no amount of learning displayed in the unities of time and place will satisfy us if the essential element of Art is missing. For, to the artist, time and place are but accessories. The passion of Art is in the life—the life of Art is in the passion. The sunlight that falls on the dead Christ at Jerusalem is the same that falls on the models in Rubens' studio at Antwerp. Tears and blood are very much alike, east and west. And just as it would still be Easter, though St. Germain

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were laid in ashes, so the artist would still be ready to paint the passion of Christ, though there were no archæologist, or traveller to explain the historical data, or to arrange the *mise-en-scène*.

That is the meaning of the words which stand at the head of this last chapter—Easter in the Studio. Even to the painter of landscape there is an Easter, in the returning sun, after the long darkness of winter. As the days lengthen and the fields put on their beautiful garments, he turns his face towards the growing brightness, and if not through Theology, then perhaps through Science, he traces its source to the same Divine fountain of light. For where there is an Easter, there must be a Sun-God. We cannot eliminate the Sun-God from the moral world, any more than we can blot out the solar light from the sky. The thing we call Religion is an essential element of life ; and therefore it is an essential element of Art. We may indeed mistake a mock sun for the real sun ; but it is only in the light of some sun that we can live. Like the cave-men we may burrow from it ; but its radiance penetrates even to the inmost recesses of our retreat. We may call it the Religion of Humanity—but it is still Religion. Without it Art could have known of no Elysian Fields ; the star-lit passage in Charon's boat could have been purchased by no golden bough ; the

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dead would have asked only for six foot of earth. Without it Christ could have given us nothing to remember, or to hope for, or to forget. Without it the World, and the Flesh, and the Devil, would be all one—and we should be one with them. Without it there would be no Easter in the Studio.

Who then refuses to take part in this great festival? Not the Sculptor—for “See, saith the Lord, I have called him by name, and filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, to devise cunning works, even cherubims of gold that shall spread out their wings, and cover with their wings—with their faces one towards another.” And so the Sculptor is called, and he brings to God—his chisel.

And then the Poet follows; and lo! God touches his lips—and he becomes the “Chief-singer to the Chief Captain.”

And then the Architect. “Send me now a man, cunning to work in brass, and in gold, and in silver, and in iron, and in timber; for the house that I build is great, for great is our God above all Gods.” And the man comes—the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan—for the inheritance of Art is generally on the mother’s side. The Architect seems to have strayed into a heathen land. There was a great deal of building going on in Tyre. But the moment the Lord’s house is

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to be built he must be brought back—this son of a woman of the daughters of Dan.

And then the Musician. Ah! these players upon instruments; these singers; these light-hearted minstrels; who won't always play the tune we want; who sulk by the rivers of Babylon. Come now—take down your harps—give us a song now! “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

“How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?”

I like the splendid loyalty of those words. How shall I sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

So, then, it is the Lord's song—and the Musician is also of the blessed company.

But where is the Painter? Is it not Easter? Does he not hold in his hand the White Rose of the Paradise of God? Have we not seen how he lays at the Master's feet his tribute of love and praise?

THE END.

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